



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 30, 2020

Contact: Gina Vanacore
916-539-1082
gina@caltransit.org

California's Transit Agencies Request Emergency Funding Relief to Prevent Massive, Permanent Cuts to Local Public Transit

California Transit Association issues formal request for relief funding to state and federal leadership, launches "California Without Transit" statewide ad campaign

SACRAMENTO – California's local public transit agencies, suffering from billions of dollars in losses due to reduced ridership and plummeting farebox and tax revenues from the COVID-19 pandemic, warned state and federal lawmakers that they are facing an existential threat that jeopardizes the economic, social, and physical well-being of the communities in which they operate.

Yesterday, on behalf of its more than 85 local public transit agency members, the California Transit Association submitted a letter to Governor Newsom and state and federal lawmakers requesting at least \$3.1 billion in funding relief *this year* to help prevent devastating permanent service reductions.

At the same time, the Association launched a statewide [digital advertising campaign](#), to demonstrate to elected leaders and the public the dire consequences of diminished or eliminated public transportation for communities across the state .

"The worldwide health pandemic has put California's public transit agencies in crisis, with many agencies at risk of permanently eliminating or reducing bus, train and other transit services," said **Joshua W. Shaw, Executive Director of the California Transit Association**. "Without state or federal support, local public transit agencies may be forced to make cuts that threaten economic recovery and disproportionately hurt disadvantaged communities."

Local public transit service is indispensable to the functioning of California communities, transporting essential workers to jobs, while supporting economic activity and social justice. This emergency funding relief would ensure public transportation is still available for communities most in need.

(more)

“Data show that those riding public transit today are essential workers and overwhelmingly women, low-income, and people of color who lack access to other mobility options,” said **Jeffrey Tumlin, Director of Transportation, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency**. “Viable public transit is essential to protecting strong and healthy communities and to avoid the loss of thousands of local jobs.”

During the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, many transit agencies saw their ridership decline by more than 90 percent, driving down passenger fare revenue. As the crisis continues, agencies statewide are now grappling with significant drops in state and local sales tax revenues, undercutting a key transit funding source for many local transit agencies.

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority anticipates a \$1.8 billion shortfall in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak. The agency has seen ridership declines ranging between 65-75 percent.

“Like many public transportation agencies throughout the state, we have been forced to reduce services that provide lifeline service for essential and frontline workers and disadvantaged communities,” said **Metro CEO Phil Washington**, “Additional state and federal resources are needed to prevent steep losses of public transportation services that our county residents desperately need.”

Without additional funding, it could take years for public transit to recover from today’s crisis. If the mobility options offered by public transit were to disappear, California risks seeing spikes in unemployment rates in underserved communities due to lack of reliable transportation to work, and worsened health outcomes and more traffic congestion associated with increased automobile traffic and use of personal vehicles.

State or federal funding relief is critical to ensuring transit agencies can continue providing the vital services needed for a balanced economic recovery, quality of life and to achieving the state’s ambitious environmental goals.

###