

**Reinvent Albany • Riders Alliance
American Institute of Architects New York • Association of Commuter Rail Employees
Brooklyn Center for Independence of the Disabled (BCID)
Center for Independence of the Disabled, NY (CIDNY)
Common Cause/NY • CUNY Institute for Urban Systems
Disabled In Action of Metropolitan NY • Environmental Advocates NY
Environmental Defense Fund • IAMAW District Lodge 19 • Jobs to Move America
League of Women Voters of New York State
National Conference Of Firemen & Oilers, 32BJ SEIU
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
New York League of Conservation Voters • NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign
Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the MTA (PCAC)
Rise and Resist Elevator Action Group • SMART Transportation Division
StreetsPAC • Transport Workers Union (TWU) International
Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100
Transportation Alternatives • Tri-State Transportation Campaign**

April 16, 2021

Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Senator Deputy Leader Michael Gianaris
Senator Liz Krueger, Chair, Finance Committee
Senator Leroy Comrie, Chair, Corporations, Authorities and Commissions Committee
Senator Tim Kennedy, Chair, Transportation Committee

Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie
Assemblymember Helene Weinstein, Chair, Ways and Means Committee
Assemblymember Amy Paulin, Chair, Corporations, Authorities and Commissions Committee
Assemblymember William Magnarelli, Chair, Transportation Committee

Dear Senate and Assembly Leaders and Committee Chairs,

Thank you for restoring dedicated transit funds to New York State's public transit systems. Because of your leadership and the hard work of your staff, the state's transit systems have \$279 million more in critically needed operating funds.

Stopping transit raids sends a strong message from the Legislature that dedicated transit funds must go to transit. Our groups are very aware that the raids on transit funding in the executive budget came just as the MTA was considering fare and toll increases of almost the same size: the proposed MTA raid totaled \$138 million, while fare and toll increases would have raised \$148 million in 2021.¹ In our view, those raids would have been a backdoor tax on low-income riders and essential workers to replace MTA funds diverted to the state's general fund.

We also thank you very much for restoring \$116 million in dedicated funds that were withheld from statewide transit systems in the FY 2020-2021 budget, including \$98 million withheld from

¹ <https://new.mta.info/document/24141>

the MTA. The loss of these revenues as the transit systems saw ridership plummeting exacerbated their existing fiscal crises. In total, the state withheld more than half a billion dollars from the MTA in 2020 at a time when it was in a desperate financial condition.

We look forward to working with you to protect dedicated transit funds, and encourage you to look at moving additional MTA and other transit funds off-budget, like the internet sales tax. The internet sales tax was intended to be a part of the central business district tolling lockbox, yet the Governor sought to divert it in his budget proposal. Sending the internet sales tax and other dedicated transit funds directly to the MTA will help improve MTA bond ratings, and save the authority and transit riders money.

We again thank you for your leadership and commitment to transit riders, and look forward to working with you to restore our state's transit systems as we rebuild from COVID-19.

Sincerely,

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