



September 10, 2018

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
Transportation and Housing Subcommittee  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Transportation and Housing Subcommittee  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
Transportation and Housing Subcommittee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Price  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Transportation and Housing Subcommittee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Collins and Diaz-Balart and Ranking Members Reed and Price:

On behalf of The Bus Coalition's (TBC) membership of over 155 small, medium, and large transit agencies spanning 43 states and the Community Transportation Association of America's (CTAA) 1,200 small city, rural, tribal and specialized transit operations, we thank you for taking steps in the FY19 THUD Appropriations process to restore funds to federal bus programs.

As you know, the Senate increased bus funding by \$400 million and allocated the additional investment similar to the ratios provided for in the FAST Act. The House increased funding for bus programs by \$550 million and directed a large portion of those funds - \$300 million – to the bus competitive grant program.

Again, we are thankful to the House and Senate Appropriations Committee for investing in bus transit and dedicating a significant share to the competitive program. As conference negotiations take place to reconcile the differences between the House and Senate versions, TBC and CTAA strongly support the higher funding levels included in the House bill, including the \$300 million investment in the competitive grant program.

While the formula program increases are certainly appreciated as a reliable source of funding, increases in the competitive grant program are critical to addressing the significant backlog of capital

needs that have built up because of cuts to the program. The formula distribution alone simply does not provide enough for small and midsize systems to replace buses or construct facilities.

Bus transit systems continue to struggle with the impacts of the great recession and the reduction of funding in the competitive program. Between 2009 and 2016, the number of transit buses operating past useful life (12-years) increased nearly 40% and the number of buses operating more than 15 years increased a staggering 92%. At the same time, total bus fleets contracted by 15% highlighting the impact of budget cuts on bus transit systems across the country.

In 2017, the competitive bus program was oversubscribed 10:1. The decreased level of federal investment, older bus fleets, higher maintenance costs and reduced level of service is taking its toll on bus ridership. The additional investment in bus programs and specifically the competitive program included in the House version of the THUD Appropriations bill will go a long way toward addressing these issues.

Bus service is a lifeline for folks to get to work, doctor visits, grocery shopping and recreational opportunities. Thank you again for your support and commitment to fund bus transit programs. With more than 51% of all transit trips being taken on buses, the positive impact of your work will be felt in communities all across the country.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to TBC's DC contact, Joel Rubin, at [joel@buscoalition.com](mailto:joel@buscoalition.com) or 202.347.9171 or CTAA's Scott Bogren at [bogren@ctaa.org](mailto:bogren@ctaa.org) or 202.247.1921. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,



Richard DeRock, President  
The Bus Coalition



Scott Bogren, Executive Director  
Community Transportation Association of America

Cc: Senate Banking Committee  
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee