



November 10, 2009

The Honorable David A. Paterson
Governor of the State of New York
Executive Chamber
Albany, New York 12224

The Honorable Sheldon Silver
Speaker
New York State Assembly
Albany, New York 12248

The Honorable Malcolm Smith
Temporary President
New York State Senate
Albany, New York 12247

The Honorable Brian Kolb
Minority Leader
New York State Assembly
Albany, New York 12248

The Honorable Dean Skelos
Minority Leader
New York State Senate
Albany, New York 12247

The Honorable Pedro Espada, Jr.
Majority Leader
New York State Senate
Albany, New York 12247

The Honorable John Sampson
Democratic Conference Leader
New York State Senate
Albany, New York 12247

Dear Governor Paterson, Democratic Conference Leader Sampson, Temporary President Smith, Majority Leader Espada, Assembly Speaker Silver, Senate Minority Leader Skelos and Assembly Minority Leader Kolb:

As Albany prepares for a special session to close a projected \$5 billion budget gap over the next two years, we write to express our deep concern over \$113 million in proposed cuts in funding to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority. We understand what the current political and economic realities are that we're facing in New York but we need to look beyond this short-term crisis to the State's long term needs.

This year marked an incredible effort to fund the region's transit needs through new and innovative revenue streams, which were able in the short term to forestall major cuts in service and fare increases and provide a down payment on the first two years of a vital transit capital program. The cuts as proposed ignore these high costs to city residents that were so evident last spring. While final package of revenues was substantial, there is still a long way to go. The MTA's current 2010 – 2014 Capital Plan is an estimated \$9.9 billion shy of becoming a reality and continued budget risks, such as low real estate transactions and a slow economic recovery, pose a significant risk to the operating budget.

We know the consequences of slashed transit aid can be severe – from increased fares and reduced service to project delays that will mean further job losses and a deteriorated, less reliable system. Already, completion dates for projects that will provide thousands of jobs and spur economic investment like the Second Avenue Subway, East Side Access, LIRR Third Track and Metro-North Penn Station Access are being pushed farther into the future.

Investing in public transportation is the right thing to do in a tough economy. A healthy, robust, well-maintained system creates jobs, supports environmentally efficient modes of travel and provides the capacity for growth the region desperately needs in the coming years. If the cuts remain, the State will signal an abandonment of its future. As members of the business, civic and labor community, we stand ready to work with you to find the right solutions and call on the state's leadership to reject any cuts to our vital transportation system.

Very truly yours,

Kevin Corbett
Co-Chair, ESTA
AECOM, Inc.

Bob Yaro
Co-Chair, ESTA
President, Regional Plan Association

Eric Alexander
Executive Director
Vision Long Island

Dr. James Melius
President, NYRIC
NYS Laborers' PAC

Mary Barber
Campaign Director, New York
Environmental Defense Fund

Denise Richardson
Managing Director
General Contractor's Association of New York

Marcia Bystryn
President
New York League of Conservation Voters

Gene Russianoff
Staff Attorney
NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign

William Henderson
Executive Director
Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to the
MTA

Kate Slevin
Executive Director
Tri-State Transportation Campaign

Marc Herbst
Executive Director
Long Island Contractor's Association

Roger Toussaint
President
TWU, Local 100

Rich Kassel
Senior Attorney
Natural Resources Defense Council

Paul White
Executive Director
Transportation Alternatives

Cc:

The Honorable Richard Ravitch
Senator Martin Malavé Dilan
Senator Bill Perkins
Senator Carl Kruger
Assembly Member Richard Brodsky
Assembly Member Keith Wright
Angelo Aponte, New York State Senate
Shelly Mayer, Senate Majority Chief Counsel
Roman Hedges, New York State Assembly
Dean Fuleihan, New York State Assembly
Ken Bleiwas, New York State Deputy Comptroller
Jay Walder, MTA Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer
Matt Trapasso, Policy and Legislative Director, Office of State Senator Martin Malave Dilan
Hilary Ring, MTA Director of Government Affairs
Larry Schwartz, Secretary to Governor David A. Paterson
Timothy Gilcrest, Senior Advisor for Infrastructure and Transportation, Office of the Governor
Gary Dellaverson, MTA Chief Financial Officer

Members of the Empire State Transportation Alliance include: Regional Plan Association, NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign, General Contractors Association of New York, Environmental Defense Action Fund, Tri-State Transportation Campaign, New York State Laborers', ACEC New York, Citizens Union Foundation, Campaign for New York's Future, Construction Industry Council of New York, Long Island Contractor's Association, Natural Resources Defense Council, New York State Building and Construction Trades Council, New York League of Conservation Voters, Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee to MTA, Transportation Alternatives.