



TRANSPORTATION
ALTERNATIVES

Straphangers Campaign

House Transportation Bill Threatens Billions of Dollars for Subway, Bus and Rail Service

House committee votes to eliminate pedestrian, bicycle safety programs

Contact: Steven Higashide, [212.268.7474](tel:212.268.7474)

A bill being considered by the House of Representatives would put billions of dollars for public transportation at risk in New York, warn transportation, civic, and environmental groups. The bill comes on the heels of another House proposal to eliminate dedicated funding for pedestrian and bicycle safety programs.

Tomorrow, the House Ways & Means Committee will consider a federal transportation funding bill (HR 3864) that would eliminate dedicated funding for public transportation. Instead, public transportation would be funded by general taxes and be subject to the unpredictable yearly budget process. Advocates urged members of the committee to vote the bill down.

“This proposal would turn one of the most reliable funding sources for transit into one of the least reliable,” said Kate Slevin, executive director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign. “It would subject public transportation funding to Congress’s political whims and annual battles.”

“New York’s economy rises and falls with the health of our transit system, and with our hundred year-old system already on life support, this bill in Washington risks pulling the plug and killing jobs throughout the city and state,” said Paul Steely White, executive director of Transportation Alternatives. “By defunding the public transit network that connects workers to jobs and businesses to customers, the House threatens to put countless New Yorkers out of work and deal a devastating blow to the region’s economy.”

"The House bill turns its back on decades of better transit in New York and all around America," said Gene Russianoff, staff attorney for NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign, a transit riders' group.

Of the MTA’s \$22.1 billion 5-year capital plan, \$5.7 billion comes from dedicated federal transit funds. Federal dollars also help pay for new buses and station improvements across the state.

“Many in Congress have touted transportation legislation as a jobs bill,” said Steven Higashide, federal advocate for the Tri-State Transportation Campaign. “But this bill would make it harder for New Yorkers to get to work and endanger thousands of construction jobs.”

The House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee is also voting today on a long-term transportation policy bill that would eliminate the major federal funding programs for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements – Transportation Enhancements and Safe Routes to School, which make up only 2% of all federal transportation spending. This morning, a bipartisan amendment to restore these programs failed on a vote of 27-29.

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-profit advocacy and policy organization working for a more sustainable transportation network in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Visit www.tstc.org.