

The Public Ought To Know

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By Corey Bearak

Obama Administration's GROW AMERICA offers needed support for Public Transit

In its annual Earth Day message, ATU Local 1056, this year in concert with Local 1179, urged New Yorkers to support and use public bus transit. On a day, we focus on our environment, touting the benefit of mass transit certainly fits.

In New York, discussion of transit often turns to how to fund the MTA Capital Plan. A recent discussion with a member of the MTA's board turned to revenue and likely shortfalls even if a plan favored by some elites got done. I then raised some funding options that empower the City and State both to step up their annual contributions for transit projects; I covered them in this space in

March.

This gets us back to the Feds. America needs a transformative, long-term initiative to make our transportation system best-in-class. The States and regional and local system must do their part but it really requires federal dollars to meet the need. We need Congress to pass the Obama Administration's **GROW AMERICA Act**. The "The Generating Renewal, Opportunity, and Work with Accelerated Mobility, Efficiency, and Rebuilding of Infrastructure and Communities throughout America Act." comprehensive six-year program, funds infrastructure improvements, primarily by supplementing the current gas tax levy supporting the Highway Trust Fund, with a 14% "transition tax" on up to \$2 trillion of untaxed foreign earning accumulated by U.S. companies overseas. The current legislation identifies \$115 billion for transit investment that New York should tap for bus and other transit improvements. That figures represents a 76% increase in average transit funding above current federal levels and includes \$5.1 billion devoted to address the maintenance backlog that afflicts public transit; another \$3.4 billion support bus rapid transit and other multimodal solutions.

***Corey Bearak can be reached at StrategicPublicPolicy.com. Find his ebook, *The Public Ought To Know*, at [Kindle](#), [Nook](#) and [Apple iBooks](#).**

