

To the editor:

At the end of March outside Penn Station, Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 1056 joined with our national and local coalition partners including our International ATU, the Transport Workers Union and its Local 100, and Operation PUSH and the Rev. Jesse Jackson as to focus the discussion in Washington, Albany and here in New York City on the need to maintain, rebuild and strengthen our mass transit network – especially here in New York and certainly nationwide. to New York. This effort – the Keep America Moving coalition – recognizes that New York City still drives our nation's economy and to thrive, New York – especially the Greater New York region, REQUIRES a thriving, working integrated mass transit system that relies on bus, subway and commuter rail service. This means reforming the antiquated federal funding formula to allow large population urban areas (population 200,000 or more) to use monies for transit operations. That's why workers and advocates again rallied at the end of last month in Washington (April 27) and tomorrow (Tuesday, May 4) at Penn Station. More rallies are planned across the United States including in Boston (tomorrow) and Atlanta next week (May 11).

The MTA voted to reduce and eliminate bus service throughout Queens. We cannot let these harmful cuts – soon to be implemented – stand. We need a commitment from the MTA that any additional Federal, State or City funding will support service (operations) restorations (In testimony to the NYS legislature, the MTA thus refused to commit that it would apply new aid to reverse service cuts and elimination.) Local 1056 represents drivers and mechanics who work for MTA New York City Transit's Queens bus division.

Historically – from its outset, the United States always recognized the great bang for its bucks by investing in transportation infrastructure and always looking at the cutting edge modes; today that means mass transit. Yet today, our nation spends more than four times more dollars (82%) on roads than on mass transit (18%). And the existing restrictive federal funding formulas that deny support for transit operations threatens basic operations, including local and express bus service. At this time of economic uncertainty, disinvestment and underinvestment in mass transit represent the dumbest public policy imaginable. When transit thrives, it drives our economy.

The investment in projects also supports the construction and manufacturing trades. The investment in solid, consistent, reliable transit service pays big dividends and any adherence to the short-sighted penny-pinchers will further setback the economy and slow if not derail our (economic recovery). A re-investment in operations makes certain our transit system moves people, workers and consumers, and students, to keep our urban centers dynamic

Thus, Local 1056 calls on all New Yorkers, all Americans, our brothers and sisters in organized labor and our elected officials at all levels to work together to KEEP AMERICA MOVING. Call, email or write your elected city, state and federal legislators. Tell them to support investments in mass transit, especially to restore planned cuts and eliminations to our bus service in Queens.

Sincerely,
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