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ATU Local 1056 Earth Day Message

“As we look for ways to protect and upgrade our environment, it makes sense for policymakers and decision-makers to look to expand the use of public bus transit options and strengthen existing capabilities,” stated I. Daneek Miller, President and Business Agent for ATU Local 1056, which represents drivers and mechanics who work for MTA New York City Transit's Queens bus division. “New Yorkers already experienced how the membership of ATU Local 1056 stepped up and helped New Yorkers get by and make sure alternative modes of transit existed while we waited for subway service to resume system-wide,” added Miller who also co-chairs the MTA Labor Coalition. “This demonstrated how buses matter both as a practical and flexible transit mode. Buses offer a cost-effective means to expand public transit options where none or insufficient modes exist.”

Based on our experience and knowledge of the MTA system, ATU 1056 puts emphasis on the need to continue to rebuild bus service – [as we did earlier this year](#) - and invest in the infrastructure necessary to keep our buses running and deliver the best service possible to New Yorkers and those who visit or work here. This includes the need to move on a new Jamaica Depot, to bolster the Casey Stengel Depot against flooding risks (Managers moved the buses to “higher ground” in advance of Sandy.) and to look at a bus terminal in Flushing that then Assembly member – now Member of Congress – Grace Meng proposed at this time last year.

Public transportation remains key to economic growth. No doubt certain folks in real estate and development recognized when they pushed for the Far West Side station between Javits and Times Square. For just that same rationale – economic growth and meeting the public's needs for transit, ATU 1056 advocates a better bus replacement schedule for Queens with too many old buses and modernized bus terminals to meet existing ridership capacities as well as the new Jamaica depot. Longer term the MTA must focus on better use of its bus lines to serve intra-borough needs rather than just funneling riders to subways and rail.

Investing in transit means more than repairs, new cars and buses and routes; it means a stable, affordable fare that encourages mass transit use and provides an affordable means for workers and visitors to get around. Public transit usage helps save our environment. It remains absolutely imperative that the MTA and the City and State officials who appoint the MTA board and all of our electeds remember the plight of our fellow working stiffs.

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