

## 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.

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