

For Immediate Release: Thursday, April 22, 2021

Contact: Corey Bearak, ATU 1056/1179 Policy & Political Director (718) 343-6779/ (516) 343-6207

**Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Earth Day Message, 2021:  
Strengthening Bus Transit A Great Green Deal!**

By **Mark Henry**, Chair, ATU NYS Legislative Conference Board and President/ Business Agent, ATU Local 1056, and **Jose DeJesus**, President/ Business Agent, ATU Local 1179

As we observe Earth Day 2021 in this era of great concern of climate change, recovery from COVID-19, and renewed recognition to invest smartly in our human and basic infrastructure, we urge our policymakers and, frankly all of us, to coalesce around sound policies that make a difference in our communities. After the chaos and devastation of Superstorm Sandy, New Yorkers experienced how ATU Locals 1056 and 1179 memberships and sister transit unions stepped up and helped New Yorkers get about on public buses while the MTA worked to resume subway service system-wide. Fast forward to today, our bus operators and maintainers stood on the frontlines of the fight against COVID-19; some – too many – losing their lives; and we stepped up despite our members working under an expired contract that the MTA REFUSES to update when similar transit public servants already work under a new contract. Through ATU International, we strongly supported the inclusion of \$32 billion in emergency operating aid for public transportation in the recent federal Coronavirus relief package. We also supported the funding for state and localities knowing that funding shored shore up the support we receive from the State and the City.

ATU continues to promote bus public transit as a cost-effective and sound means to improve our environment and to support our recovery from the effect of Covid-19. ATU recognizes, as do most experts, that, without a fully functioning transit system, we cannot expect New York City's – and thus our state and national – economy to fully recover and achieve growth beyond. This includes treating all workers fairly and equitable. All who perform the same work must receive the same pay and not be treated as part of some caste. ATU workers deserve a contract for the same work as those the MTA already settled with and refuses to discuss with ATU.

ATU continues to remind our policymakers and decision-makers to include public bus transit options and strengthen existing bus capabilities. This includes all discussions on how best to improve mass transit, especially in the so-called transit deserts that plague many NYC nabes including in Queens.

As we seek to protect and upgrade our environment, and discuss a Green New Deal, it remains important to recognize how public bus transit enhances our environment and reduces our carbon footprint while supporting our economy and investment. ATU Local 1056 represents drivers and mechanics who work for MTA New York City Transit's Queens Bus Division. ATU 1179 represents bus operators, mechanics and supervisors who work from the Far Rockaway and JFK Depots of the MTA Bus division (former Green Bus lines). Our members provide additional transit options – during periodic subway service shutdowns to allow repairs; this demonstrates how buses matter both as a practical and flexible transit mode. Buses offer a cost-effective means to expand public transit options, including sensible bus rapid transit, where none or insufficient modes exist. The allows policymakers to deliver transit improvement early and most cost-effectively.

On this Earth Day 2021, ATU locals across New York State support public bus transit; it helps save our environment, creates jobs and builds communities.