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**WITH THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY TRAVEL UNDERWAY, MAYOR DE BLASIO AND
BIPARTISAN REGIONAL LEADERS URGE INCREASED FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION
INVESTMENT**

Nation Facing \$900 Billion Backlog Just to Get Roads, Bridges, Transit into State of Good Repair; In NYC Alone, Over 160 Bridges Over a Century Old – Yet House Bill Would Cut \$140 Million a Year From Transit in NY & NJ

NEW YORK—As families around the tri-state region hit the road for the Thanksgiving holiday and Congress debates a transportation reauthorization bill, Mayor Bill de Blasio and a bipartisan coalition of regional officials are urging additional federal investment through a multi-year bill that increases funding for vital infrastructure, such as subways, buses, streets, bridges, rail, and ferries.

At a Penn Station press conference this afternoon, Mayor de Blasio, Congressmen Jerrold Nadler and Dan Donovan, Westchester County Executive Robert Astorino, local elected officials, and transportation advocates highlighted the infrastructure crisis facing our region and our country.

“Along with football and turkey, New Yorkers are about to confront another time-honored holiday tradition: travel, and the delays that come with it,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “We’re facing a national infrastructure crisis, and it will only get worse if Congress doesn’t act. At a time when we should be investing in our roads, bridges and transit, our region is facing the possibility of cuts. Bipartisan leaders from across this region and this country have made it clear: we need a multi-year bill that increases investment in our infrastructure – and our future.”

Since 2009, federal infrastructure funding has remained stagnant – with major consequences that include a nearly \$900 billion national backlog to get roads, bridges, and transit into a state of good repair. The current House bill would actually cut funding for transit in New York and New Jersey by \$140 million a year (totaling \$840 million over the six years of the bill) – including an \$80 million a year cut to New York City regional transit (totaling \$480 million over the six years of the bill).

Today, the United States has a D+ infrastructure rating from the American Society of Civil Engineers, it has fallen from first in the world to twelfth when it comes to economic competitiveness, and the country has a greater number of deficient bridges than it does McDonald's restaurants. Congestion costs the U.S. economy over \$120 billion each year. The U.S. is spending a 20-year low of 1.7 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on infrastructure – while China spends 9 percent.

Here in New York City, over 160 bridges are more than a century old, and the average commuter spends three days a year in traffic. New York City alone generates 10 percent of the nation’s GDP; the region and its workforce simply cannot succeed without the region’s transportation infrastructure.

Increased investment would help New York City, the broader tri-state region, and cities around the country address the nearly \$900 billion state-of-good-repair backlog and make the investments in infrastructure that the U.S. needs to be competitive.

For example, \$100 million in additional funding for projects in New York City could support 1.75 billion annual subway riders, resurface approximately 400 lane miles, implement Vision Zero safety improvements at approximately 50 schools, replace a Staten Island Ferry vessel, or help maintain safety and state of good repair of the City's 789 bridges.

Today's press conference follows recent letters to Congress from 73 bipartisan mayors ([here](#)) and from Mayor de Blasio and the New York City congressional delegation ([here](#)) urging increased investment.

"This is a critical time as Congress is finally on the verge of passing a long term transportation bill," said **Congressman Jerrold Nadler**. "Cities like New York need a strong federal partner and our first priority is to make sure there is adequate funding through the term of this bill to deal with the backlog of investment needs that continue to grow on highways, bridges, transit and rail. It should go without saying that in an environment where funding is limited, you simply cannot make drastic changes in state allocations and cut funding in communities around the country. Investment is critical for our regional and national economy, which is why I am very proud of having helped create the new national freight program. Yet the proposed elimination of the High Density State Apportionments, which provides critical funding for communities all around New York, must be addressed. Such proposals that target New York funding are not fair, they are not sound economic policy, and they will jeopardize the prospect of the bill's passage."

Congressman Dan Donovan said, "Mass transit funding for the New York City region – the country's economic engine – goes beyond political parties. Staten Island and South Brooklyn in particular face a worsening transportation crisis that requires creative solutions and the resources to implement them. The cuts contained in one version of the long-term transportation bill are simply unacceptable, and I will fight with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to reverse them."

"Every work day, more than 600,000 people commute into New York City – more than the entire population of Boston or Baltimore. These commuters join 8.6 million people who live in New York City. Our ability to compete in the Twenty-First Century will depend on expanding access for people and materials to enter and move within New York City and reach their destinations," said **Congresswoman Yvette Clarke**.

"Unfortunately, our roads, bridges, and public transportation remain inadequate. In the Congressional District I represent, workers have an average commute of more than forty minutes, often driving on busy streets and packing into crowded subway cars and buses. I believe the federal government, with the City of New York and the State of New York, has a responsibility invest in improved transportation facilities."

"Funding for transportation infrastructure is critical for a densely urban city like New York City. With ridership up on subways, and most modes of transportation at or overcapacity, we need to invest to bring our system into the 21st century. Federal funding is critical to build improvements such as the Second Avenue Subway, East Side Access, expanded ferry service, implementing select bus service, rebuilding crumbling bridges like the Kosciuszko Bridge and modernizing our subway signaling system. Accordingly, I am delighted to join Mayor de Blasio and the Congressional delegation in supporting appropriate funding for the federal surface transportation program," said **Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney**.

Congressman Charles B. Rangel said, "I applaud the Mayor for working with my congressional colleagues and local and regional elected leaders to address the City's dire need to modernize our transportation systems. With the busy holiday season approaching, this is something that will be even more critically necessary to travelers. Providing accessible and safe transportation is necessary to help working families, strengthen our economy, create jobs, and rebuild America."

“With one-third of the nation’s transit riders located in New York City, it is clear our city requires a robust surface transportation bill that makes smart investments in public transportation,” said **Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez**. “I encourage my colleagues to work together to ensure Congress achieves this goal, which will bolster our region’s and our nation’s economy for the long term.”

"With the holiday season upon us, the importance of safe travel cannot be overstated," said **Congressman Eliot Engel**, a senior member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. “We should all be able to take comfort in the knowledge that our loved ones are on well-maintained roads and bridges, and using modern infrastructure worthy of the 21st century. This is why it is so critical for surface transportation to be fully funded. As the conference committee comes to a consensus on the House and Senate’s surface transportation packages, I will continue to remind the conferees not only the role this bill will play in ensuring Americans’ safety, but also in promoting economic growth.”

Congresswoman Nita Lowey said, “Sound transportation investments protect families, fuel business, and help the New York metropolitan area remain the nation’s economic powerhouse. With ridership projected to increase over the next two decades, it is imperative that the federal share of transportation funding keep pace. As Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Committee, I will continue fighting to ensure our transportation needs are met.”

“As any New Yorker knows, mass transit is an integral aspect of our daily lives,” said **Congresswoman Kathleen Rice**. “That’s especially true for the hundreds of thousands of Long Islanders who ride the Long Island Rail Road every day. For millions of commuters in New York and across the Northeast, mass transit isn’t just the most convenient or the safest form of transportation, it is often the only form of transportation. We use it to get to and from work, to go to the doctor, to go the grocery store and get our kids to school. Over the past decade, the High Density States Program has provided critical funding to meet our region’s unique and unmatched demand for public transportation, and I’ll continue to advocate for a robust, long-term transportation bill that keeps this critical funding source intact.”

Mayor of Newark Ras Baraka said, “Federal funding for transportation must match the needs of our region and our nation. Our infrastructure has not kept up with the demands of major cities. This impacts our economy and has simply not been given the proper attention. Now is the time for action by passing a comprehensive transportation bill with increased funding. We must ensure that our buses, bridges and roads are appropriately funded and I will continue to work with partners on this bipartisan issue.”

Mayor of Hoboken Dawn Zimmer said, “Our region can ill-afford to have patchwork fixes that continually puts our aging infrastructure at risk. I strongly urge our federal officials to pass a long-term transportation bill and commend Mayor de Blasio for organizing this bi-partisan coalition of Mayors to advocate for this vital issue.”

"This is a bi-partisan effort to restore critical transportation funding," said **Westchester County Executive Robert P. Astorino**. "More than \$100 million is at risk for the Northeast, and \$1.2 million for Westchester. This money is needed to keep our trains and buses operating so people can get to work. All we are asking is for Congress to apply common sense: continue to fund transportation based on population."

Nassau County Executive Ed Mangano said, "Transportation investment is pivotal to our interconnected region. Here on Long Island, there’s not a single resident or business that doesn’t rely on our roads and bridges, our buses, or the LIRR. This is a bipartisan issue. We need Congress to reverse the dangerous cuts to transit in our region, and increase investment in our infrastructure and our future.”

Rockland County Executive Ed Day said, “Rockland County is already dead last in the region when it comes to transportation funding. This type of cut will not only be devastating to public transportation and those who rely on it, but also will risk the time line for the new New York Bridge completion. Without the funding, all

future bus transit across that bridge will be at risk, effectively killing the public transportation component for years to come.”

"This is vital transportation funding that must be restored," said **Dutchess County Executive Marcus J. Molinaro**. "The loss of these critical transportation dollars is a significant blow to our regional transportation network, at a time when more people than ever are relying on our public transportation.”

City Council Ydanis Rodriguez, Chair of the Committee on Transportation, said, "Though I commend Washington for coming together on an issue, the transportation funding bill currently being considered woefully addresses the deep need for investment that our urban areas need. As more and more residents throughout our nation move to our urban centers, the federal government must invest more in expanding and improving public transportation networks to help move millions. I am proud to stand with Mayor de Blasio, a national leader and a strong advocate for our nations urban centers.”

“The transportation infrastructure is key to making this region work, and that’s crucial to the whole nation’s economy,” said **Assembly Member Richard N. Gottfried**.

State Senator Brad Hoylman said, “The northeast corridor, home to nearly a sixth of the population of the United States and more than half of its transit riders, is the economic and historical heart of our nation. This region, with New York at its center, is dependent on federal programs like the High Density States program for the safe and efficient movement of its entire transportation system. Cuts to this program represent gross negligence on the part of the federal government and I want to thank Mayor de Blasio and DOT for bringing attention to such a critical issue that could affect the lives and livelihoods of millions of people throughout our state and region.”

"Successful societies require well-maintained, modern infrastructure," said **Council Member Corey Johnson**, whose district includes Penn Station. "The need for well-funded transportation systems is never more clear than during the holiday season, when millions of Americans travel through our train stations, airports and bus depots. Unfortunately, years of underfunding has left our transportation infrastructure outdated and vulnerable. Cities and states cannot make these investments themselves; it requires the full buy-in of the United States Congress. I want to thank Mayor de Blasio for calling for a robust federal transportation reauthorization that reverses the 5340 cut. I want to thank Congress Member Jerrold Nadler for his continued leadership, as he leads the charge in Congress for funding that meets our transportation needs.”

"The riding public is counting on the feds to come to our rescue," said **Gene Russianoff, Staff Attorney for the NYPIRG Straphangers Campaign**, a transit riders' group based in New York City. "Our battle cry to Washington? No taxation without decent transportation.”

"All New Yorkers depend on our extensive regional transit network," said **Paul Steely White, Executive Director of Transportation Alternatives**. "We stand with the elected officials from around the metropolitan area and call on Congress to approve a reauthorization that will restore funding cuts to our transportation system.”

"The Herrera Beutler amendment would strip the tri-state region of \$175 million in transit aid, with New York suffering the brunt of that loss with a \$100 million cut. There are 15 transit systems in addition to the MTA that would lose critical federal funding at a time when local and state funding declines. The eight jurisdictions impacted by this amendment account for 52.6 percent of all transit riders in the United States. For the sake of our economy, environment and equal opportunity, Congress must strip this detrimental amendment from the transportation bill," said **Veronica Vanterpool, Executive Director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign**.

John Raskin, Executive Director of the Riders Alliance, said, "Public transit will always be underfunded until the federal government does its fair share. Congress should come together to pass a transportation bill that increases transit funding to match a growing transit ridership nationwide. Thanks to Mayor de Blasio and New York's congressional delegation for highlighting the importance of federal funding for transit."

"Global cities that compete with New York for talent and jobs have modern, reliable transportation systems that are heavily funded by their national governments. We should expect nothing less," said **Kathryn Wylde, President and CEO of the Partnership for New York City**. "One in every three public transit rides in the United States happens in New York City, reflecting our enormous contribution to the national economy."

Tom Wright, President, Regional Plan Association, said, "At a time when Americans' demand for transit has never been higher, it's vital that Congress restore the high density states funding eliminated in the House bill. Supporting public transit benefits all Americans, by reducing traffic on our roadways, cutting air pollution and allowing our work force to reach jobs on time."

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