



March 20, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510



The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510



Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leaders Schumer and McCarthy:



Our metropolitan areas' economies are facing unprecedented challenges as a result of the global pandemic caused by the novel coronavirus. Several industries have been severely impacted to date, from hospitality and small businesses to the transportation industries. Congress is developing legislative proposals to immediately address the public health crisis and respond to the enormous impact it is having on the economy; we are grateful for your work to date and appreciative of pace, depth and collaboration of the results. We continue to support those efforts, and we urge you to continue to work quickly, in a bipartisan manner, to protect workers, businesses and the broader economy from the impacts of this crisis, both near-term and long-term. Failure to act now will have a far greater long-term cost to our country.



The Metropolitan Civic Leadership Alliance represents organizations comprised of the leading CEOs and senior executives of major employers, professional firms, universities, and other senior civic leaders in large metropolitan areas in the United States. We are committed to making our metropolitan regions the best places to live, work, and grow a business. The partners involved in the Metropolitan Civic Leadership Alliance are as geographically diverse as our economies.

We are all feeling the impacts of this crisis, and we need your leadership to ensure urgency in tackling the problems we face together. We encourage you to pass a stimulus package that provides adequate financial relief to individuals and families, especially for the most vulnerable; preserves jobs; maintains business liquidity and viability for those most affected; and protects the health and safety of our frontline workers.

Amongst impacted sectors from this crisis, our transportation systems are facing unprecedented financial and operating strains. Measures to keep the public safe have resulted in reduced ridership, revenues, and increased operating costs for transportation agencies and businesses across the country. As part of the efforts to address these impacts, we ask that you ensure our transportation systems have the support needed to provide their vital services to our regions and enable us to recover from this crisis together.

First, these pressures are most acutely being felt by public transportation agencies in the largest metropolitan regions we represent – the immense loss of revenue due to the public health crises is raising questions about whether these agencies make a perilous decision to severely limit or turn off essential services due to long-term budget impacts from running lightly used services. We strongly urge you to provide additional funds and target them toward the largest public transportation systems, including Amtrak, that are facing the most severe loss of ridership and revenues and are in most immediate need of operational assistance to ensure these systems can continue to provide their essential services. The amount of funds should assume that the existing pressure on transit systems could take months to recover. Funds should supplement, not supplant existing and future capital grant programs that are necessary to upgrade these critical systems.

Second, in addition to our public transportation agencies, our aviation, ports and freight sectors have seen devastating impacts to their ability to operate and support their employees. The airline industry, for example, is experiencing near-term liquidity issues that could jeopardize thousands of jobs and drastically alter the connections we need to make to grow the economy when we persevere through this emergency.

Third, our region's large airports are also in a dire situation – with the number of passengers and flights down to historic lows producing insufficient revenues to operate, maintain, and grow these economic engines. Support to airports should be based on need and impact, focusing resources to impacted airports that have also been asked to provide additional services to handle passengers arriving from abroad.

The future success of our regions – which is directly tied to the nation's prosperity – requires a strong federal partner. We are aligned to support your leadership in the passage of a broad economic relief package as we all work together during this severe public health and economic crisis. Again, thank you for your every effort to lead our country through this crisis and back to great health, both for our economy and for everyone who contributes to and benefits by it.

Sincerely,

Bay Area Council

Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of
Chicago

Greater Washington Partnership

Massachusetts Competitive Partnership

Metro Atlanta Chamber

Partnership for New York City

Silicon Valley Leadership Group

The Washington Roundtable