

Philip D. Murphy, Governor
Sheila Y. Oliver, Lieutenant Governor
Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti, Commissioner
Kevin S. Corbett, President & CEO

NJ TRANSIT

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Dear Members of the New Jersey Congressional Delegation,

The COVID-19 State of Emergency has created unprecedented declines in travel, pushing NJ TRANSIT rail ridership down 98% percent and bus ridership down 93% percent. Revenues have declined proportionately. The New Jersey federal delegation's leadership and advocacy have provided a lifeline in the face of such staggering declines, resulting in NJ TRANSIT receiving significant and vital federal transit aid through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. We cannot thank you enough for this relief.

At the same time, COVID-19's staggering impacts also have seriously impacted other key transportation providers – including operators of the ferries that represent an important element of the trans-Hudson travel system for New Jersey.

Prior to the current crisis, ferries provided more than 20,000 customer trips per day on average between New Jersey and Manhattan. Just as importantly, the ferries have been and continue to be an important component of New Jersey's ability to provide essential transportation during emergencies such as severe weather events, major power outages and terrorist events. In the months after the September 11th attacks, when the Port Authority's PATH service was being rebuilt, the ferries stepped in, carrying some 60,000 passengers per day and helping preserve the connection between New Jersey and New York. It is vital that the ferries continue to be able to offer this protection to our transportation system. Notably, the ferries are the only trans-Hudson mode that still has additional capacity available, capacity that will gain importance in the future as ridership first recovers from the COVID crisis and then returns to robust annual growth.

NJ TRANSIT has long worked with ferry operators to ensure the continued viability of this important component of the State's transportation system. Our partnership has resulted in the creation of significant infrastructure improvements for New Jersey, including the Weehawken Ferry Terminal, as well as the receipt of millions of dollars of federal funding for ferry capital projects, such as rebuilding ferry vessel engines and dredging docking areas – projects that have supported growth in employment and our continued economic prosperity.

It is in everyone's interest to ensure that the ferry operations continue to contribute to the network of transportation options that work synergistically to support our citizens' quality of life and the economies of New Jersey and the region. For these reasons, NJ TRANSIT supports the ferry operators' efforts to obtain direct emergency relief in upcoming economic legislation.

Sincerely,



Kevin S. Corbett
President & CEO