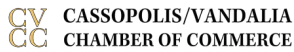




MASSTRANS

TR Transportation Riders United



(logos of a sampling of signers, full list below)

May 20, 2025

Dear Michigan legislators:

It is a much-discussed fact that Michigan's transportation system has long been under-funded – an obstacle to our economic competitiveness and improving quality of life in our state. The current debate over a 'roads deal' presents great possibilities; however, we cannot afford to let this be yet another missed opportunity to invest in a sustainable, 21st-century transportation system – one that works for every person and business in our state. The people of Michigan deserve a full range of transportation options that are affordable, accessible, and well-maintained.

As representatives of groups and communities throughout our state, **we urge the Legislature and Governor to ensure that the state's budget and any "road funding" deal restores funding to maintain and enhance public transportation services** -- including transit, rail,

ferries, pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure, and services for seniors and those with disabilities.

In particular, Michigan's local bus systems are increasingly facing a funding crisis due to state support that fails to keep up with rising costs and increased demand. The Governor's FY26 budget proposes just \$226 million for Local Bus Operating (LBO), which is nearly a 10% reduction from last year and an all-time low share of state support. Faced with rising costs and a continued increase in bus services competing for state support, many local bus systems are confronting cuts to critical staffing and transportation services. These cuts could leave employees without rides to work, veterans without rides to medical or social services, and students without rides to school programs – problems most acute in Michigan's rural and lower-income communities where local buses are a lifeline to many.

We call on legislators to take note of the transportation challenges facing their districts, particularly at a time when senior populations are booming, younger generations are driving less than ever, and the costs of car ownership are greater than ever. Because access to reliable transportation is a common barrier, improved transportation options are a key solution to addressing human, economic, and environmental challenges.

We specifically urge you to increase transit funding in the FY26 budget. Local Bus Operating (LBO) support must be restored to the near-fully-funded levels Michigan provided in prior decades, which **would require about \$440 million in LBO funding**. This is a level of investment that would ensure that essential rides remain available and would help promote economic growth and well-being for Michigan communities. We appreciate the Senate budget's inclusion of additional transit funding (to \$241 million) beyond the Governor's proposal of \$226 million; while it isn't yet the amount needed for meaningful improvements, it would help avert serious cuts that transit providers have feared.

Perhaps most importantly, **any "road funding" package must include comprehensive transportation modes**, at a level consistent with the longstanding funding formula that supports the vital Comprehensive Transportation Fund (CTF, which funds bus, rail, ferry, and other nonroad transportation) **with 10% of transportation spending**. We are glad to work with all parties on viable funding options that actually meet the needs of this moment and into the future.

Michigan can and must do better when it comes to transportation policy, and we see this moment as an opportunity to invest in the future of our state. **We can be more competitive, more livable, more forward-looking, and serve our people better by investing in a full range of transportation options that serve everyone in our state**, regardless of age, disability, region or income.

Signed by:

AFSCME Local 312
Muneer Islam, President
Detroit

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 836
Melvin Turnbo, President/Business Agent
Grand Rapids

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1093
Earl Cox Sr, President
Kalamazoo

Benzie Senior Resources
Brigit Hassig, Executive Director

Cadillac Wexford Transit Authority
Carrie Thompson, Executive Director
Wexford County

Cass County Transportation Authority
Gerry Bundle, Executive Director

City of Ionia Dial-A-Ride
Heidi Wenzel, Director

Clinton Area Transit System
MaLissa E Schutt, Executive Director
Clinton County

Detroit Greenways Coalition
Todd Scott

Disability Network Eastern Michigan
Traci Comer-Scarsella, Associate Director Oakland &
Macomb Region

Disability Rights Michigan
Michelle Roberts, Executive Director

Ecoworks
Briana DuBose, Executive Director
Detroit

Groundwork Center for Resilient
Communities
Carolyn Ulstad, Transportation Program Manager
Traverse City / Petoskey

MASSTrans
Ken Jimkoski
Represents 22 transit agencies statewide

Amalgamated Transit Union Local 26
Schetrone Collier, President/Business Agent
Detroit

Ann Arbor Area Transportation Authority
Jeff Pfeifer
Ann Arbor area

BATA - Bay Area Transportation Authority
Justin Weston, Finance Director
Grand Traverse and Leelanau counties

Benzie Transportation Authority
Jessica Carland, Executive Director

CALSTART
Alissa Burger, Regional Policy Director
National / Troy

Cassopolis/Vandalia Area Chamber of
Commerce
Billie Hires, President

Climate Cabinet
Marta Johnson
National / Grand Rapids

Detroit Disability Power
Kaci Pellar

Disability Advocates of Kent County
David Bulkowski, Executive Director

Disability Network Michigan
Teri Langley, Executive Director

Ecology Center
Charles Griffith

Environmental Law & Policy Center
Kelly Thayer, Senior Policy Advocate
National

MACC Development
Edythe Ford
Detroit

Michigan Association of Planning
Andrea Brown, Executive Director

Michigan Association of Railroad Passengers
Steven Vagnozzi

Michigan Environmental Council
Ross Gavin, Policy Director for Transportation
Represents 70+ groups statewide

Michigan League for Public Policy
Monique Staton, President and CEO

National Wildlife Federation
Rebecca Meuninck, Great Lakes Regional Executive Director

Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan
Ben Stupka, Executive Director

Sierra Club Michigan
Tim Minotas, Deputy Legislative and Political Director

Shiawassee Area Transportation Agency
Mary Rice, Executive Director
Shiawassee County

Western Oakland Transportation Authority
Kim Viener, Executive Director

Michigan Community Action
Thomas Visco, Policy Director

Michigan Health & Hospital Association
Kelsey Ostergren, Director, Health Policy
Represents 171 hospitals and other health institutions

Michigan Public Transit Association
John Dulmes, Executive Director
Represents 137 transit agencies and companies

Michigan Clinicians for Climate Action
Lauren Church, Interim ED

ITP/The Rapid
Deb Prato, CEO
Grand Rapids metro area

Social Justice Alliance of Cass County, MI
Della Bundle, Secretary

Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision
Raquel Garcia, Executive Director