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PUBLIC  
TRANSPORTATION  
ASSOCIATION**

October 8, 2020

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**PRESIDENT AND CEO**

Paul P. Skoutelas

The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
500 C Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Gaynor,

On behalf of America's public transportation industry, which directly employs more than 435,000 workers and supports millions of private-sector jobs, I write to urge you to reverse the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) new interim policy, *Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic: Work Eligible for Public Assistance (Interim) (FEMA Policy FP 104-009-19)*, which took effect on September 15, 2020. The new policy eliminates the ability of public transit agencies to seek reimbursement for purchasing disinfectants, personal protective equipment (PPE), and similar COVID-19-related costs under FEMA's Public Assistance program.

The safety and health of essential workers remains the top priority for our industry. To combat the spread of COVID-19 and ensure the safety of their employees, customers, and systems, public transit agencies have adopted rigorous cleaning regimes and safety protocols. With the new interim policy, public transit agencies are being denied access to critical funds to offset the enormous costs to help them in the fight against COVID-19.

Moreover, on a bipartisan basis, Congress recognizes the importance of providing public transit agencies with federal assistance for PPE and other critical supplies and is working to reverse FEMA's interim policy. On September 30, 2020, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 8266, the "FEMA Assistance Relief Act of 2020". This bipartisan bill clarifies that public transit agencies are eligible for FEMA assistance to help communities continue to provide safe and accessible service.

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The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor

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In addition, on October 1, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 925, “The Heroes Act”, which contains this same critically important provision. *See H.R. 925, Division Q, Title II, § 202.*

A September 2020 survey of APTA public transit agencies found that six of 10 public transit agencies will have to cut service or furlough staff if Congress and the Administration do not provide \$32 billion of additional COVID-19 emergency transit funding. Given their enormous budget shortfalls, transit agencies cannot afford a change in policy that burdens them with additional costs related to COVID-19. We strongly urge FEMA to reverse its new interim policy and allow public transit agencies to continue to seek reimbursement for COVID-19-related costs under the Public Assistance program.

We greatly appreciate your attention to this critical issue. We look forward to working collaboratively with you during these challenging times.

Sincerely,



Paul P. Skoutelas  
President and CEO

cc: K. Jane Williams, Deputy Administrator, Federal Transit Administration,  
U.S. Department of Transportation