



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1546

Resolution calling upon the United States Congress to provide immediate funding for mass transit expansion and improvements and to subsidize fuel costs for public transit systems.

By Council Members Brewer, Dickens, Felder, Fidler, Gentile, James, Liu, Nelson, Recchia Jr., Reyna, Recchia Jr., Stewart and Lappin

Whereas, According to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), a nonprofit public transportation trade organization, more than 10.3 billion trips were taken on public transportation in the United States in 2007, representing the highest number of such trips over the last fifty years; and

Whereas, During the first quarter of 2008, public transportation ridership rose nationwide by 3.4 percent, demonstrating the need to expand and improve public transportation; and

Whereas, According to the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), the entity which oversees the development, maintenance and operation of major public transportation networks in the New York City region, while China spends 9 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) on infrastructure and India is planning to boost its infrastructure spending from 3.5 percent to 8 percent, the United States spends less than 1 percent of its GDP on infrastructure investments; and

Whereas, This relatively small investment in infrastructure cannot meet the increasing demand for public transportation in the United States; and

Whereas, New York City's transportation system is also showing signs that an increase in investment in its infrastructure is needed; and

Whereas, For example, although the population of Staten Island grew by 17% between 1990 and 2000, the largest population growth in the five boroughs of New York City according to the 2000 Census, service at

the Staten Island Ferry, a vital transportation link to Staten Island, has not increased significantly to meet the growing demand; and

Whereas, MTA statistics show that subway ridership throughout the City is up 29 million riders from the first quarter of 2008 compared to the first quarter of 2007 and bus ridership is up more than 45 million riders during that same period; and

Whereas, To address shortfalls in its budget, the MTA has increased transit fares twice in the last three years to cover infrastructure improvements and general operating costs; and

Whereas, In addition to population and demand growth, another major contributing factor to increases in operating and maintenance expenses of public transportation systems is soaring energy prices; and

Whereas, In April 2008, APTA performed a survey on public transportation fuel costs which found that between 2004 and 2008, fuel costs rose by 166%; and

Whereas, According to the American Automobile Association (AAA), during June 2008, the national average price of a gallon of gasoline topped the \$4 mark for the first time in history, up from \$3.67 a month earlier and \$3.10 a year earlier; and

Whereas, According to the United States Department of Energy, the price of a gallon of diesel fuel has reached \$4.65 per gallon, which is more than \$1.81 or approximately 40% higher than a year ago; and

Whereas, With a barrel of oil exceeding \$140, experts are speculating that gasoline may cost as much as \$5 or \$6 per gallon with the increased demand during the summer months; and

Whereas, Increasing gas prices will impact public transportation and force operators to make difficult decisions that may include decreasing service and increasing fares for the general riding public; and

Whereas, Public transportation investments help to stimulate economic development according to “Dollars & Sense: The Economic Case for Public Transportation in America,” a recent transit coalition report written by members of APTA, which found that every dollar taxpayers invest in public transportation generates \$6 or more in economic returns; and

Whereas, The APTA report also found that every \$1 billion of federal investment in the nation's transportation infrastructure supports the creation of 47,500 jobs; and

Whereas, Public transportation provides a myriad of benefits such as ensuring commuter safety, providing commuting cost savings, easing traffic congestion, improving air quality, reducing energy consumption, stimulating economic development and fostering more livable communities and should be provided with a sufficient level of federal funding to address its need for growth and its ability to provide services in the face of rising costs; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls upon the United States Congress to provide immediate funding for mass transit expansion and improvements and to subsidize fuel costs for public transit systems.

JM
LS# 5726
July 7, 2008