



March 19, 2020

Dear Members of Congress:

Employers and their employees are facing challenges unlike any they have ever faced before in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19). As public health policy encourages us all to distance ourselves from others as much as possible, there will be near-term and long-term impacts on how people choose to commute to work. These decisions may have ramifications that impact quality of life and public health in regard to congestion, equity, and air quality. While many employers have been able to instruct employees to work from home, this is not a solution for millions of workers that are required to be on-site. It is imperative that Congress act to ensure that all individuals remain able to access their jobs efficiently and affordably during this crisis and into the future.

The Association for Commuter Transportation, which represents employers, universities, hospitals, public agencies, commuter services organizations, and others that directly employ and assist tens of millions of commuters across the country, asks that Congress consider the following measures to ensure that all Americans are able to get to work.

- Increase the Qualified Transportation Fringe Benefit from \$270 to \$300. This will increase affordability of public transit and vanpool services for individuals and put more money into the pockets of commuters.
- Expand the Qualified Transportation Fringe Benefit to include verified carpools. Including carpooling as an eligible benefit within the Qualified Transportation Fringe Benefit will encourage individuals to carpool while helping reduce the cost of the option. Carpooling is an accessible option for all commuters across the country, especially in regions underserved by public transit.
- Provide a temporary waiver for occupancy requirements for vanpools to receive reimbursements from Federal Transit Administration. Vanpooling is a great option to move smaller groups of 10-15 employees to a worksite. However, many vans are now operating at significantly reduced occupancy due to work from home requirements and layoffs. A temporary waiver would help keep these important options on the road by ensuring they remain affordable.
- Provide \$100 million to create a marketing and promotion grant program to support education and awareness of travel options and telecommuting. Eligible entities would include transportation management associations/organizations, state/regional commuter services programs, MPOs
- Provide funding to support research quantifying the impacts the coronavirus is having on our transportations and commuters, in order to develop recommendations to better prepare our communities for future events.
- Provide funding to support the development of teleworking programs along with research and recommendations to ensure continued adoption and use of telecommuting into the future.
- Reinstate the Bicycle Commuter Pre-Tax Flexible Spending benefit at the previous level of \$30 per month. This would support the adoption of bicycling to work, which promotes social distancing. This would allow for bicycle commuting expenses including maintenance and storage to be treated as Pre-Tax and reimbursed by the employer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Straus", written in a cursive style.

David Straus
Executive Director