



Durbin, Duckworth Join Call For \$32 Billion In Transit Funding In Next Covid-19 Stimulus Package

July 9 2020 1:12 PM

SPRINGFIELD – U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) joined Senator Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and 22 of their colleagues to urge Senate leadership to provide an additional \$32 billion in emergency supplemental funding for public transit agencies in the next COVID-19 stimulus package. Transit agencies have been hit hard ever since stay-at-home orders were first announced in states across the country back in March, resulting in plummeting ridership and fare revenues needed to keep trains and buses running safely and on time.

“Through the depths of the current crisis, public transportation agencies have continued operating to ensure that essential workers and others can do their jobs and get back to their families at the end of each shift,” the Senators wrote in a letter to the Senate’s Majority and Minority Leaders Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and Chuck Schumer (D-NY). “These operations have enabled our economy to stay alive, but they have come with massive increases in costs while revenues have fallen.”

“Now, as the public health crisis has necessitated the continuation of stay-at-home orders for months in states across the country, we must recognize the true costs of the coronavirus on our transit systems,” the letter continued. “Decreased farebox revenue has continued longer than we anticipated two months ago, and the reduction in other revenue sources such as local sales taxes are deeper than anyone predicted. Many transit agencies, particularly those hardest hit by the pandemic, will exhaust their CARES Act funds before the end of the year.”

The lawmakers’ request falls in line with the request made by transit agency officials at some of the largest transit systems in the country. Representatives from transit agencies

in San Francisco, Atlanta, and several labor unions, outlined their need for additional federal assistance back in May to help them recover, implement new health and safety procedures and resume full service.

In addition to Durbin, Duckworth, and Menendez, Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Ed Markey (D-MA), Bob Casey (D-PA), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Brian Schatz (D-HI), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Gary Peters (D-MI) and Tina Smith (D-MN) also signed the letter.