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**Written Testimony for the Senate Transportation Committee Hearings by the  
Statewide Transit for All PA! Coalition**

Whether you live in Harrisburg or Pittsburgh, Wilkes Barre or Erie, rural towns or Philadelphia, all Pennsylvanians deserve safe, reliable, dignified access to the places they need to go and public transportation funding is critical to making that happen. The SEPTA region is facing an imminent funding shortage which has been projected to yield catastrophic service cuts and fare increases. Other communities across the Commonwealth continue to operate with substantially less transit service than they did pre-pandemic. The passage of a one time \$80 million dollar funding infusion into the Public Transportation Trust Fund should not distract from the very urgent need to have a dedicated funding source for transit agencies across the Commonwealth. It's time for the legislature to take this foundational part of our state's economy and mobility seriously.

**We heard the call from Secretary Carroll and in the House Transportation Hearings for recommendations for long term transit and transportation funding solutions.** We have solutions to offer: In 2021, the Transit for All PA! Coalition was born out of statewide grassroots canvassing and organizing efforts, with particular emphasis in State College, Scranton, Lancaster, Harrisburg and Philadelphia. The transit workers and riders in these communities collaborated on multiple statewide Zoom calls of over 100 participants each to develop a grassroots, equity-centered platform of state transit funding mechanisms and legislative outcomes. This platform and the values at the heart of the Transit for All PA! Coalition demonstrates the commitment to transit riders and workers as experts in identifying the barriers to mobility in our communities, and the solutions that will be most effective at removing those barriers. Since the platform was developed, over 50 local and statewide organizations, more than 25 legislators, and thousands of individuals have signed on in support. Much of this platform was elevated and adopted into Governor Wolf's Transportation Revenue Options Commission report through my participation on that

committee. Below we offer this platform, including our menu of funding options that could offer sustainable, non-regressive long term funding to keep our transit systems moving.

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## **Transit for All PA! Platform**

We believe that transit should be funded:

- 1. To serve Pennsylvania's diverse needs.** Transit is rural and urban; it is for people of all ages and abilities. Pennsylvania has shared-ride service for seniors and people with disabilities in every county of the state, medium-sized systems in cities like State College, Allentown, Erie, Lancaster, Scranton and Harrisburg, and large transit systems in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Transit funding matters to the entire state.
- 2. Through progressive mechanisms.** We need to end tax loopholes and favoritism so that corporations and the super-wealthy pay their fair share.
- 3. With sustainable, long-term funding sources.** Transit agencies need dependable, long-term funding to make responsible decisions about preserving or expanding service, so that public transit workers and riders are not faced with service cuts, fare increases, and or layoffs to address funding shortfalls. Funding should also be flexible, so that local transit agencies can prioritize capital or operations funding needs.
- 4. Equitably with roads and bridges.** We believe in a fix-it first approach to our highway systems, and that highway expansion runs counter to our responsibilities around climate resiliency, congestion mitigation, mode-shift needs and our other fiscal responsibilities.
- 5. With transit riders and transit workers at the table.** People who use and run the system should be at the table for deciding the funding mechanisms and in evaluating how those funds should be invested in our regions. Those with the most at stake (and who know how the system works) should be given an important voice in decision-making.
- 6. Without inflicting harm or funding reductions to other essential state services and programs.** Transit plays an essential role in access to employment, healthcare, housing, and education, but none of their funding sources should be cannibalized to pay for the other. All these critical state services must be fully funded – as well as transit.

**We additionally affirm the National Campaign for Transit Justice Principles**, which calls for transit to be:

- Equitable
- Sustainable
- Economically productive
- Safe and accessible
- Affordable

Negotiations around transit funding will be difficult, but we must find solutions to keep our state moving. PA transit riders and workers put forward this “menu” of options for our legislators to consider.

We support general reforms to the tax code to make revenue streams into the PA General Fund more equitable, including implementing the Fair Share tax and closing the Delaware loophole. However, because we recognize that these mechanisms will ensure that the General Fund is able to address the Commonwealth’s education and public health needs, among other critical priorities, our focus is on the below-listed tax revenue sources for dedicated statewide funding towards public transit. We are also strongly in favor of removing the PA State Police from the Motor License Fund, which will save upwards of \$800 million dollars annually to be invested in transportation.

We additionally support local revenue sources for expanding transit funding that include congestion pricing, taxing private parking lots, taxing large non-profits, and land value taxes.

After consultation with riders, workers, and advocates we would like to guide PA legislators to the following range of state funding mechanisms that we support, to provide a dedicated statewide revenue stream for public transit:

Corporate and Individual Wealth Taxes

**Corporate Income Tax Increase:** An increase on the tax on the profits of a PA corporation

**Implementation of a Corporate Head Tax:** Implementation of a flat fee charged per employee for businesses over a certain size

**Wealth Tax:** Implementation of a tax on the net wealth a Pennsylvania resident holds, for those with total wealth over several million dollars

Road User Fees:

**TNC Fee:** A per ride tax on any Transportation Network Company (TNC) company trip like Uber or Lyft

**Interstate Tolling:** A statewide toll of interstates and expressways

**Mileage-Based User Fees:** This new road user charge will charge 3.16 cents to 7 cents per mile

**Excise Tax on Vehicle Delivery:** This is a percentage of value on goods delivered from third-party delivery companies, like Amazon

Progressive Vehicle Ownership Taxes:

Increase to Truck and Tractor-trailer Registration Fees: These fees will be tacked on heavy-duty trucks and tractor-trailers registered in the state of Pennsylvania

**Vehicle Property Tax:** This is a percentage fee on the assessed value of a vehicle (or .35% of the annual value)

**New Car Vehicle Sales Tax:** This will increase in the current vehicle sales tax to address the Act 44/89 sunset in 2022

**Luxury Vehicle Tax:** This is a tax on all of the luxury vehicles sold and registered in the state of Pennsylvania

**Vehicle Rental Tax:** This is an increase on a tax on all vehicle rentals made in the state of Pennsylvania.

Transit riders and workers with Transit for All PA! are organizing for more affordable fares, better compensation for transit workers, and a visionary baseline service for all PA communities that includes frequent buses and trains going to more places, for more hours of the day. By adequately funding public transit in rural areas, towns, cities, we are opening

doors to economic opportunity AND saving our planet. We are ensuring that our most vulnerable neighbors can get everywhere they need to go, AND can live in communities with less congestion and with better air quality. As elected officials, you have the power to invest in the communities, the economies and the environment we want to see.