



Tell
your legislators to
VOTE
NO



Dear Smart Growth Supporters,

The United States House of Representatives has released a long-term federal transportation bill that *completely decimates transit and pedestrian and bicycle amenities*. It eliminates all dedicated funding for transit, eliminates programs that fund pedestrian/bicycle/traffic calming projects, and does little to repair structurally deficient roads and bridges. New York lawmakers and transportation officials are warning that this bill could result in \$1.7 billion being slashed from the New York State budget for transportation. The effects would be disastrous. The House plan to vote on the bill, the American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act (H.R.7), as soon as next week. **We need your help to stop this bill from passing.**

Vision Long Island is joining with thousands of people and organizations today, Feb. 9, for a **national day of calls to defeat H.R. 7. [Can you take a moment today to call your U.S. Representatives? It only takes a moment and will have a big impact.](#)**

Visit Transportation for America's [website](#) to look up your Representative and his or her phone number. Alternatively, you can just call the Capitol Switchboard at (202) 224-3121 and ask to speak to your Representative. Leave your message with the person in the office who answers the phone, or ask to speak to the legislative associate who handles transportation. Here is a sample script:

Hi, my name is [NAME] and I live in [PLACE]. I'm calling to ask Representative [NAME] to vote "NO" on HR 7, the American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act.

This bill would eliminate dedicated funding for public transportation and deprive my community of the tiny amount of funding that helps make our dangerous streets and roads

safer for children and others on foot or bicycle. It does not do enough to fix our bridges and roads or provide people more options for getting around. It also does too little to put Americans back to work at this difficult time and create the jobs we desperately need.

*We desperately **do** need an updated federal transportation bill, but this proposal advanced by the House is not it. Thank you for your time.*

Here is some more background information:

The House of Representatives' version of the long-term federal transportation reauthorization bill, The American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act (H.R.7), was released last week and quickly moved through committee mark-ups. Late last week, the Ways and Means Committee overturned over 30 years of bipartisan policy when they amended the bill to reverse how transit is funded. Rather than use an existing formula that utilizes part of the gas tax, the bill guts dedicated funding and instead relies on a one-time, non-secure infusion from the general fund. Supporters of HR7 have claimed that transit will not be cut in the future. But it is unacceptable to trade the secure transit funding lockbox that exists today for a verbal promise that may be quickly forgotten by future Congresses.

The bill completely eliminates the already minute amount of funding that helps to make dangerous streets safer for children and other pedestrians on foot or bikes, through the Transportation Enhancements and Safe Routes to Schools programs, both which have funded several recent projects on Long Island. (See some examples [here](#) and [here](#))

HR 7 systematically destroys the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Act (CMAQ) which was created to support transportation projects that contribute to air quality improvements and provide congestion relief. States are now allowed to use CMAQ to fund any project that reduces congestion (in the short term), including highway expansions.

In short, this bill permanently devastates funding for public transportation and ensures inadequate transportation infrastructure for America's future. Millions of Americans will be left confused and without means of transportation. HR 7 threatens to jeopardize thousands of jobs in the public transit field, an area already greatly damaged by a troublesome economy. New York State could lose \$1.7 billion in its transportation budget.

The House bill and the Senate's version of the bill could both be voted on next week.

Over 600 organizations have signed on to a public statement that opposes this transit-gutting bill, including the American Planning Association, Smart Growth America, American Society of Civil Engineering, League of Conservation Voters, the National Association of Transportation Offices, Safe Routes to School, the United States Chamber of Commerce, United Steam workers, Volunteers of America, AARP, AFL-CIO, and Vision Long Island.

Here's what some folks are saying about this bill:

U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said: "This is the most partisan transportation bill

that I have ever seen. And it also is the most anti-safety bill I have ever seen. It hollows out our No. 1 priority, which is safety, and frankly, it hollows out the guts of the transportation efforts that we've been about for the last three years... It's the worst transportation bill I've ever seen during 35 years of public service."

MTA Chairman Joseph Lhota said: "If this bill goes forward, we'll have to make some serious decisions because of the lack of funding, what will continue, what will move forward and at what pace. It will also affect track work and renovations." Lhota warned that this bill could halt the East Side Access project that would connect LIRR trains to Grand Central Station as well as the Second Avenue Subway expansion. Read more [here](#).

NYC Mayor Michael Bloomberg said: "Eight million people take mass transit every day in New York which helps to cut traffic, reduce pollution, spur our economy and improve public health. The bill passed today ignores the needs of cities across the country by relegating transit to an "alternative" transportation with an uncertain funding stream. Our country is being left behind as the world races ahead with 21st century infrastructure investments, this bill would take us even further from our competitors."

Now it's our turn to speak up. Call your Representatives and urge them to advocate for America's future by voting [**AGAINST HR 7!**](#)

Learn more from our national coalition, [Transportation for America](#).