



Encourage immediate federal investment in transit systems to support their needs through the COVID-19 pandemic and promote reduced emissions.

Climate Jobs Recommendation

A reduction in transit services due to COVID-19 will ultimately impact Illinois' ability to reduce transportation emissions. Public transportation systems are facing extreme drops in ridership and reduced revenues, resulting in the potential for decreased services in the future. The federal government provided relief funding through the CARES Act, signed into law in late March. Illinois received a total of \$1.62 billion, with Chicago transit systems getting \$1.43 billion ([U.S. Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois, 2020](#); [Blumberg, 2020](#)). While this immediate aid helped to maintain operations during the initial stay-at-home order, additional funding will be needed in the coming months and years. The American Public Transportation Association has requested from Congress an additional \$32 billion in emergency funding to address future deficits for all transit agencies nationwide. In supporting this ask, Illinois will ensure that adequate transit services can continue and thrive in the future to support reduced transportation emissions.

Background and Details

Transit systems have experienced unprecedented drops in ridership and are facing significant revenue shortfalls. At the height of Illinois' stay-at-home order through April and May, CTA rail and Metra experienced ridership drops of 86% and 100%, respectively, compared with 2019. CTA bus and Pace fared slightly better at 68% in the same time period. In recent months, ridership only slightly increased to a 50-60% decline year-over-year for bus services, but remains over an 80% decline for rail. Additionally, total Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) sales tax revenues– which support Chicago's three transit agencies– declined by 28% in April and 24% in May (the two worst months), compared to the same months in 2019. Combined with less severe losses in March and June, this is \$66.3 million below 2019 levels. The CTA, Pace, and Metra have also experienced at least an 80% reduction in farebox revenue for April and a 90% reduction in May compared to the same months in 2019 ([RTA, 2020](#)).

A Pro-Worker, Pro-Climate Illinois

Public transportation is vital to reducing overall emissions, supporting an efficient and equitable transportation network, and creating middle-class jobs in Illinois.

- Transit produces fewer emissions than personal automobiles. Compared to a single-occupancy vehicle, heavy rail– like the 'L' in the Chicago region– produces 76% fewer emissions per passenger-mile, commuter rail produces 63% fewer emissions, and bus transit produces 33% fewer emissions ([U.S. DOT, 2010](#)).
- Transit is an essential service, especially for disadvantaged populations. Overall, non-white populations are more likely to use transit. Black and African American residents only make up 11.6% of total workers, yet account for 23.3% of transit commuters. Similarly, Hispanic and Latinx residents make up 16.1% of total workers and 17.0% of those using transit to commute. Additionally, of transit commuters in Illinois, almost 31% earn less than \$25,000 annually ([U.S. Census, 2018](#)). Transit also serves those populations that do not have access to vehicles. Of total occupied housing units in Illinois, 10.8% do not have access to a vehicle ([U.S. Census, 2018](#)).
- Transit is a source of quality, union jobs. In 2019, Illinois employed over 11,000 bus drivers and 1,900 locomotive engineers (which includes those operating freight trains) ([BLS, 2019](#)). Chicago alone employs over 16,000 people between the CTA, Metra, and Pace. Operator jobs– which are largely unionized– account for the greatest proportion of employees, making up 59% of CTA staff, 58% of Metra staff, and 62% of Pace staff ([RTA, 2019](#)).