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Congressman Auchincloss Introduces Supporting Transit Commutes Act in Brookline

Last Wednesday, ACT's Executive Director David Straus joined Congressman Jake Auchincloss, MBTA General Manager Phillip Eng, and other Massachusetts elected leaders and transportation advocates to introduce the Congressman's new legislation, the [Supporting Transit Commutes Act](#), and emphasize the importance of commuter benefits. The bill would restore employers' ability to fully deduct transit benefits when they subsidize some portion of their employees' commutes. In addition, should the employer only offer a pre-tax option, they are eligible to deduct 50% of the amount withheld. In permitting full deductibility for transit subsidies, the legislation encourages employers to offer subsidies rather than pre-tax benefits.

ACT members are encouraged to call their members of Congress and urge them to support the *Supporting Transit Commutes Act*. United States Representatives are there to do just that – represent – and they count on you to communicate with them your priorities and goals. Should you prefer to email your member of Congress instead, an email template can be found below.

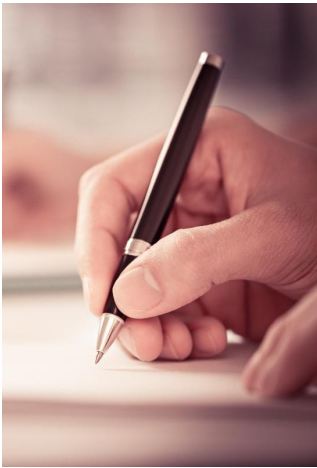
Representative (representative's name)

My name is (your name), and I am a resident of (municipality, city). I am writing to encourage you to support Congressman Auchincloss' bill, the Supporting Transit Commutes Act. Commuter benefits is an issue that affects all Americans whether they use public transit or not. For users of public transit and their employers, this legislation will increase their transit options and make for an easier commute to and from work. This bill also benefits drivers by encouraging the use of public transit and reducing traffic congestion. Having public transit infrastructure is crucial, but in order for it to succeed the demand must be there as well. This bill will increase that demand and promote a quicker and cleaner commute. (Optional: personal testimony on how this will positively impact your commute or your organization's efforts to promote transit and vanpools)

Thank you for your time and consideration.

*Sincerely,
(your name)*

Public Comment for FTA Buy America Waiver



In August, the FTA announced that it would consider extending the current Buy America Waiver and is seeking public comment. FTA Buy America is composed of two main policies; all rolling stock must contain 70% domestic steel content, and final assembly must occur in the United States. This is critical policy in support of vanpooling since as of right now there are no widely available vanpool vehicles that meet these two requirements. The Buy America policy does include a clause that allows the FTA Administrator to provide a waiver for nonavailability, and FTA has granted numerous waivers in the past to agencies on the basis of nonavailability. The last waiver passed in 2022 expires on October 25, 2024. Should this waiver fail to be renewed, federal transit funding cannot be used to finance vanpool programs that use minivans, which make up roughly 2/3 of the nation's vanpool fleet. It is urgent that the waiver be extended, and ACT is asking that its members [provide comments](#) in support of the extension.

ACT's Vanpool Council has provided the following talking points to consider and include for comments:

1. Provide background on your program – how many vehicles are in service. Are there key employment centers that this program serves (military facility, hospital, manufacturing, etc.)
2. Speak to the importance of the vanpool program as a congestion relief/carbon reduction strategy, job access/economic development, and other benefits of the program
3. Write in strong support of an extension of the waiver for three years or until such a time that a readily available vehicle comes on the market
4. Oppose adding an additional requirement to the current waiver

[Submit a comment](#)

TDM Week is Nearly Here!

TDM WEEK 2024
Transportation Demand Management Week

With [TDM Week](#) beginning on September 16, it is time to finalize commitments and get ready to shine a spotlight on TDM. TDM Week is our opportunity to get loud and highlight the crucial role TDM plays in making our commutes quicker, safer, and cleaner. It is never too late to make a social media post, write a letter to the editor, or call your local, state, or federal representatives. Spreading awareness about TDM is not limited to one week a year and while it is never a bad time to publicize its importance, TDM Week is a concerted effort to make its impact felt on a much larger scale.

If you have already made a pledge and have a resource to share with ACT, [email us](#) so we can amplify your message!

[Learn more about TDM Week](#)



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