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Appropriations Committee
Public Hearing
apptestimony@cga.ct.gov

February 14, 2020

Dear Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Hartley, Representative DeMassi and Members of the Committee,

At the 1:30 pm Public Hearing today you will be receiving and reviewing testimony about the Department of Transportation budget. In the biennial budget, the bus operations line item is \$201,522,710; the Governor's revised budget (*OPM FY2021 Biennial Budget Adjustments*) recommends a \$2.3 million reduction, bringing the bus operations to \$199,222,710.

As noted in OPM's budget adjustments, the *"proposal offsets the subsidy to bus operations by the amount of revenue collected by the UPASS program"*.

However, the \$2.3 million used for this offset was, and is, intended to be used to enhance services following the increase in ridership associated with the Upass program. It should be considered supplemental to the budget number in the biennial budget and preserved for its original uses. Its use as an offset precludes the expansion of bus transit services.

Recent CTDOT surveys indicate 25% of Connecticut students in the Upass program had never taken public transportation before. The program has been highly successful, providing more than 5 million student rides since August 2017, it is a valuable program and worthy of expansion.

Governor Lamont's 2030 plan notes *"CT2030 is a master plan that makes critical investments in Connecticut's roads and bridges, public transit systems, airports, and ports—and in their connections to one another and to transit-oriented development. CT2030 invests \$14.2 billion in our roads and bridges and \$7.1 billion in our public transit systems."*

Today, bus riders represent half of the 80M public transit trips made in the State. We urge legislators to not only preserve but expand the fiscal 2021 budget bus operations line item. Any reduction in bus operating investment results in service reductions at a time when the State should be expanding public transit alternatives. Connecticut needs strong bus service as part of its multi-modal system of transportation to meet mobility needs today and in the future..

For more information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 860-841-7275 or email mary@cact.info.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Tomolonius, CACT Executive Director