

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1257

To amend title 49, United States Code, relating to continuation of operating assistance for small transit operators in large urbanized areas.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 24, 1999

Mr. FROST introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To amend title 49, United States Code, relating to continuation of operating assistance for small transit operators in large urbanized areas.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Transit Fairness Act
5 of 1999”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

8 (1) small transit operators, including those in
9 large urbanized areas (urbanized areas with a popu-
10 lation of at least 200,000), are usually more reliant

1 on Federal operating assistance than larger opera-
2 tors;

3 (2) Federal operating assistance has been elimi-
4 nated, from the fiscal year 1995 level of
5 \$710,000,000 to \$0 in fiscal year 1999;

6 (3) the elimination of operating assistance over
7 the 4-year period provided little time for many small
8 transit operators in large urbanized areas to adjust,
9 and without the resources to make up this gap,
10 these small transit operators might have to cut serv-
11 ice and raise fares;

12 (4) the elimination of operating assistance for
13 small operators in large urbanized areas could harm
14 the quality of transit service for their customers re-
15 sulting in fare increases, or substantial service cuts
16 to meet the anticipated shortfall in Federal oper-
17 ating funds;

18 (5) a Transportation Research Board analysis
19 conducted in 1996 concluded that transit riders in
20 some areas would see their fares double if operators
21 have to pass Federal operating assistance reductions
22 on to passengers;

23 (6) fare increases or service cuts would particu-
24 larly impact people with disabilities and the elderly;
25 and

1 (7) operating assistance funding reductions can
2 cause transit service to decrease, thus worsening
3 highway gridlock especially in large urbanized areas
4 where most of the Nation's traffic congestion occurs.

5 **SEC. 3. CONTINUATION OF OPERATING ASSISTANCE FOR**
6 **SMALL TRANSIT OPERATORS IN LARGE UR-**
7 **BANIZED AREAS.**

8 Section 5307 of title 49, United States Code, is
9 amended—

10 (1) by adding at the end of subsection (a) the
11 following:

12 “(3) PRIMARY TRANSIT OPERATOR.—The term
13 ‘primary transit operator’ means the designated re-
14 cipient for, or the largest transit operator in, an ur-
15 banized area with a population of at least 200,000.

16 “(4) SMALL TRANSIT OPERATOR.—The term
17 ‘small transit operator’ means an entity, other than
18 a primary transit operator, receiving assistance
19 under this section that has fewer than 20 revenue
20 service vehicles and operates in an urbanized area
21 with a population of at least 200,000.”; and

22 (2) by adding at the end the following new sub-
23 section:

1 “(o) CONTINUATION OF OPERATING ASSISTANCE
2 FOR SMALL TRANSIT OPERATORS IN LARGE URBANIZED
3 AREAS.—

4 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may allow a
5 small transit operator in an urbanized area with a
6 population of at least 200,000 to use funds made
7 available under this section to fund the operating
8 costs of equipment, facilities, and associated capital
9 maintenance items for use in mass transportation if
10 the Secretary finds that providing no assistance to
11 the small transit operator providing mass transpor-
12 tation service to elderly and persons with disabilities
13 for such operating costs has caused or will cause—

14 “(A) the small transit operator to suffer
15 undue hardship; or

16 “(B) significant fare increases or cuts in
17 transit service.

18 “(2) LIMITATION.—The amount of funds made
19 available for operating costs described in paragraph
20 (1) to small transit operators in an urbanized area
21 in accordance with this subsection in a fiscal year
22 may not exceed a total of 5 percent of the funds
23 made available under this section in such fiscal year

- 1 to a designated recipient for an urbanized area with
- 2 a population of at least 200,000.”.

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