

Urging The Governments Of The State Of New York And The United States Of America To Establish Fossil-Fuel-Free State And Federal Public Transportation Services

Referred to: The Energy, Environment and Sustainability Committee (Chairwoman Greene and Legislators Hansut, Levine, Maloney, and Stewart), and The Public Works, Capital Projects and Transportation Committee (Chairwoman Petit and Legislators Erner, Fabiano, Litts, and Nolan)

Legislator Phil Erner and Legislators Greene, Hewitt, Sperry, and X offer the following:

WHEREAS, Ulster County Area Transit (UCAT), operated by the Department of Public Transportation, has as its mission to provide quality public transportation to the residents of Ulster County in a safe, reliable, and cost-effective manner; and

WHEREAS, UCAT depends on funds from state and federal governments in order to deliver such services; and

WHEREAS, Ulster County contains many roads, bridges and other public transportation infrastructure owned, maintained or otherwise pertaining to the state and federal governments, including such marked and unmarked touring routes and truck routes within the city of Kingston, and which connect Ulster County with other locations; and

WHEREAS, at present most of UCAT's fixed-route bus service operates upon such state & federal roads; and

WHEREAS, one-third of all Ulster County residents live within one-quarter mile of UCAT's current fixed-route bus service; and

WHEREAS, if the state and federal governments also operated public transportation services, then UCAT could expand its services; and

WHEREAS, at present the public funds most roads, bridges and related infrastructure in ~~this country~~ **United States of America** for both passenger transportation and freight; and

WHEREAS, in New York State the people have a right of access to navigable waterways, yet ferry and other public boat services have declined now existing mainly for pleasure not transportation; and

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WHEREAS, freight railroad remains widespread despite the nationwide decline of passenger rail, and it passes through Ulster County with little if any local benefit yet bringing air and noise pollution and dangerous crossings in many communities; and

WHEREAS, it has become mostly an individual responsibility to maintain one's own vehicle or other conveyance in order to make use of such infrastructure where public transportation is impractical or unavailable; and

~~WHEREAS, at present it is mostly an individual responsibility to maintain one's own vehicle or other conveyance in order to make use of such infrastructure; and~~

WHEREAS, the seven-and-one-half percent of Ulster County households who lack access to a private automobile thereby lack meaningful access to public roads and bridges that their taxes pay to maintain just the same as households that have cars; and

WHEREAS, for those households lacking cars, it is generally not a choice but a socioeconomic hardship; and

WHEREAS, personal motoring is not an option for many Ulster County individuals with disabilities, youth and elders cannot; and

WHEREAS, more Ulster County households would choose public transportation if available; and

WHEREAS, even for those households which can and do possess and operate private vehicles, transportation represents one of their greatest and skyrocketing expenses for insurance, repairs and fuel, and thus may be a burden more than a privilege; and

WHEREAS, New York State mandates that public transportation be provided to all students attending primary and secondary schools; and

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WHEREAS, ~~establishing state and federal public transportation systems could help to slow the degradation of the earth by reducing extraction and consumption for transportation; and to reduce material and energy imports~~ **extraction & consumption for transportation**, and the exploitation of socioeconomically disadvantaged peoples, **emissions & motor-vehicle traffic density, and furthermore to improve roadway safety with a greater proportion of professional, trained drivers;** and ~~to reduce emissions and motor vehicle traffic density contributing to healthier bodies and safer neighborhoods~~ **all of which would contribute to healthier and safer human bodies, neighborhoods & communities and more sustainable ecosystems;** now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, that Ulster County calls upon the governments of the State of New York and the United States of America to establish and maintain comprehensive public transportation systems, upon all state and federal roads, bridges and related infrastructure, including such marked and unmarked touring routes and truck routes within ~~the city of Kingston~~ **cities and villages**, that shall prioritize ~~the car-free public's access to conveyances comparable to the infrastructure's usual usage, and for purposes of socioeconomic equity, environmental justice, national security and public health and safety, and which shall not depend upon extraction and burning of fossil fuels~~ **access by the public who are low-income, low-wealth, lack personal transportation and/or are mobility-impaired, to conveyances comparable to the infrastructure's usual usage, and for purposes of socioeconomic equity, environmental justice, national security and public health and safety;** and, be it further

RESOLVED, that Ulster County further calls upon state and federal governments to negotiate and legislate ~~the a public's right of access to~~ **presently** private transportation infrastructure ~~at present~~ including but not limited to freight-railroads ~~tracks and cargo-shipping corridors, prioritizing the low income, low wealth public's access to conveyances comparable to the infrastructure's usual usage, and which shall not depend upon extraction and burning of fossil fuels;~~ and, be it further

~~RESOLVED, that Ulster County further calls upon state and federal governments immediately to plan to abolish the extraction and burning of fossil fuels, and move its adoption.~~

ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES:

NOES:

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Postponed in Committee: Energy, Environment and Sustainability on August 3, 2023

Postponed in Committee: Energy, Environment and Sustainability on September 7, 2023

Passed Committee: Energy, Environment and Sustainability on _____.

Passed Committee: Public Works, Capital Projects and Transportation on _____.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

NONE