



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Lea Webb

## Ithaca Carshare Saved!

LEA WEBB September 15, 2023

| ISSUE: **ITHACA CARSHARE**



Governor Hochul signed the Webb/Kelles Ithaca Carshare Bill and saving the non-profit from selling off its fleet and permanent closure

**ITHACA, NY** - This afternoon, Senator Lea Webb, Assemblymember Anna Kelles, local elected officials, advocates, and community members held a press conference on the Ithaca Commons thanking Governor Hochul for signing the Ithaca Carshare bill ([S5959B/A5718B](#)) into law, saving the beloved non-profit from permanent closure. Ithaca Carshare, a membership-based carsharing service that has served the community for 15 years, paused

operations on May 19, leaving more than 1500 local members without 24/7 access to 30 vehicles for their transportation needs.

**Said Senator Lea Webb,** “This is an exciting day for Ithaca, our region and state. Thank you to Governor Hochul for signing the Ithaca Carshare bill, making sure that this integral non-profit can continue to provide critical access to transportation for our constituents, many of whom can’t afford to buy a car or choose to not to in order to cut down on their carbon footprint. This pause in operations has been difficult for Ithaca Carshare staff who have been furloughed and for community members who rely on their services. Ithaca Carshare has served the City of Ithaca and its surrounding communities for over 15 years, providing an equitable and sustainable means of transportation to over 1500 Ithacans who utilize the service and who eagerly await its return.”

**Said Assemblymember Anna Kelles,** “I am thrilled that Gov. Hochul signed the bill, ensuring Ithaca Carshare and all similar transportation related nonprofits can access the insurance they need through a risk retention group to continue operations. Ithaca Carshare is an icon in our community, embodying our collective values of equity and environmental conservation. And as transportation is one of the greatest contributors of greenhouse gas emissions, continuing community carsharing, and moving forward with the electrification of carshare fleets, is a critical solution to combating transportation’s impact on climate change. Throughout this year, I have heard from hundreds of constituents about how important carshare is to them and how they rely on it for their transportation needs. I deeply appreciate the energy of this community that helped move this bill forward, and I thank Senator Lea Webb and her team for their essential partnership throughout this process.”

**Said Ithaca Carshare Director Liz Field,** “I can’t thank our legislators enough for all their hard work in making this happen, and to our members and supporters for fighting this fight with us. This bill not only saves our organization, but will allow nonprofit carshares across the

state to open and flourish. Carsharing is an important piece of solving many transportation challenges, while greatly reducing carbon emissions. I'm happy that New York is now in line with the rest of the country when it comes to carsharing."

**Background:**

Webb and Kelles's bill passed unanimously through the New York State Legislature in June ([S5959B/A5718B](#)). This bill allows nonprofit organizations like Ithaca Carshare to get auto insurance from a nonprofit Risk Retention Group, as is allowed by federal law, solving a long-standing auto insurance market failure for nonprofits.

In order to reduce carbon emissions in our state and equitably tackle climate change, New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) has invested \$3 million so far in carsharing in New York, with millions more planned over the next two years to expand nonprofit carshares, but none of this would have been achieved and carshares would have closed down if they couldn't get auto insurance.

Nonprofit carsharing helps Governor Hochul meet her stated climate and equity goals by reducing traffic congestion and carbon emissions. According to a Cornell study from 2013, each carshare vehicle replaces up to 15.3 vehicles on the road, easing burdens on transportation infrastructure and the associated costs. Additionally, carshares provide access to private mobility options for people in low-income neighborhoods and offer grant-funded programs that enable low-income individuals to use the service.

**Ithaca Carshare does not rely on public funds for its general operating budget.** Membership and usage fees pay for the service, vehicles, fuel, insurance, repairs, and maintenance. Grants help pay for conversion to electric vehicles and supporting equitable access to carsharing.

The law becomes enacted six months after the Governor's signature, allowing the Department of Motor Vehicles an implementation period to align necessary systems. Ithaca Carshare anticipates operating again in March 2024.

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