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NYS Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2026 Executive Budget Proposal: Transportation

February 3, 2026

Thank you, Chairs Krueger, Pretlow, Braunstein, Sepulveda, and committee members for the opportunity to submit testimony. The New York Building Congress represents more than 500 member organizations and over 250,000 skilled tradespeople and professionals dedicated to building, maintaining, and modernizing New York’s infrastructure. We appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony on the State’s transportation priorities and investment needs.

High-quality public transportation is a cornerstone of New York’s economy and a great equalizer that connects New Yorkers of every background to jobs, education, and opportunity. It is also a proven economic engine. Every dollar invested in public transportation generates roughly four dollars in economic returns, strengthening regional competitiveness and supporting good-paying jobs. Our industry is committed to delivering those returns through projects that provide a clean, safe, and affordable transit system.

We commend the State for hearing our industry’s call and fully funding the MTA’s 2025–2029 Capital Plan. This was a critical achievement that provides the certainty needed to advance long-deferred state of good repair work, accessibility upgrades, and system modernization. We look forward to supporting its successful and timely implementation. We also strongly support the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey’s proposed \$45 billion 2026–2035 Capital Plan, which invests across airports, PATH, ports, bridges, tunnels, and other core regional assets. To maximize the value of these investments, federal environmental and permitting reviews must be streamlined, with clear timelines and coordinated agency decision-making for projects requiring federal approval.

To improve project delivery and stretch public dollars further, the Building Congress urges the State to focus on five policy priorities. First, change orders and payments must be processed more quickly, particularly when work is complete. Establishing a formal industry feedback loop would help identify bottlenecks and keep projects moving. Second, risk allocation should be right-sized to broaden competition, including rebalancing insurance, indemnification, and bonding requirements that do not improve outcomes. Third, a stronger qualifications-based selection process is needed so projects are awarded based on expertise as well as cost, leading to higher-quality results and fewer delays. Fourth, the State must accelerate station accessibility by committing to full ADA compliance, prioritizing high-ridership and transfer stations, and publicly tracking progress. Fifth, transit-oriented development tools such as Zoning for Accessibility should be expanded so private development can help fund station upgrades while adding housing near transit.

Alongside these reforms, we urge continued investment in critical transportation projects for today. These include advancing the Second Avenue Subway by beginning construction

on Phase 2 and moving planning forward on Phase 3 and the 125th Street crosstown expansion, delivering the Interborough Express, and fully reimagining the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway with a comprehensive, federally supported solution.

New York must also plan boldly for the future. Priorities include a fully modernized Jamaica Station, the LaGuardia Airport AirTrain and enhanced Mets-Willets Point station, expanded subway connections to underserved communities, new cross-harbor and regional transit links, strategic new bridge crossings, decking over highways such as the Cross Bronx Expressway to create housing and open space, and expanded pedestrian and cycling infrastructure that better connects our boroughs.

Finally, we were proud to mark the groundbreaking of the Port Authority Bus Terminal in 2025. This long-standing Building Congress priority will soon deliver meaningful improvements for millions of daily commuters and demonstrates what sustained commitment can achieve.

The Building Congress urges the Legislature and Administration to continue investing in transportation infrastructure that keeps New York moving, competitive, and equitable. We look forward to working with you to deliver these critical projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carlo Scissura', written in a cursive style.

Carlo A. Scissura, Esq.
President and CEO
New York Building Congress