



ENVIRONMENTAL LAW & POLICY CENTER

Testimony to
Chicago City Council Committee on Transportation and the Public Way
Regarding **Resolution R2025-0016638** in support of Transit Funding & Reform
Lena Guerrero Reynolds, ELPC Communications & Policy Advocate
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Hello, I'm Lena Guerrero Reynolds, a Communications & Policy Advocate for the Environmental Law & Policy Center. I'm also a lifelong Chicagoan and transit rider. I'd like to thank Alderman Vasquez and the 37 cosponsors of the ordinance to support public transit funding and reform, including my Alderman Gardiner in the 45th ward.

This is an urgent moment. The transit fiscal cliff could mean 40% service cuts, making it harder for everyone to get around. Over a quarter of Chicago households have no car and more should be able to save the money and still get around. Transit is the circulatory system for our city and the backbone of our regional economy, so cutting transit would affect millions of people who never step foot on a bus or train. In just the first year, we could lose \$2.6 billion in regional GDP and 500,000 CTA bus riders would be cut off from their local stop, adding thousands of cars to the road. To put that number in context, the Kennedy expressway only carries 250,000 cars.

Transportation is the leading source of carbon emissions in Illinois, the only sector of our economy polluting more now than decades ago. Emissions grew by 43% from 1990 & 2017, though cars are more fuel efficient, because people keep driving more distance more often, cause many times it's their only option. Transit has been underfunded for years, we cannot let it get worse. We need more frequent, safe, and reliable transit to make it the appealing choice and increase ridership throughout the region.

Public transit is one of the most sustainable ways to get around. On average, taking transit results in 60% less carbon pollution than driving a car by yourself, and a lot of the time it eliminates all your footprint, because you're just one more passenger on a bus or train that was already traveling. The more people take transit, the more efficient it gets, unlike driving which gets worse as more people do it by creating traffic.

Chicago has some of the best infrastructure in the country, other cities would kill for this much grade-separated rail, built-out bus networks, and transit-oriented economic vitality. We cannot squander the investments of past generations.

New state bills offer funding & governance reforms to improve regional coordination and restore and revamp transit for the future. But it will depend on everyone. Funding transit is a matter of economic opportunity, equity, & environmental justice. We need the city's support in Springfield, so I urge you to support this resolution today.

HQ: 35 East Wacker Drive | Suite 1600 | Chicago, IL 60601

[ELPC.org](https://elpc.org) | (312) 673-6500

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