

**Testimony before the  
Regional Transportation Authority**

Jan 16, 2025

Hello, my name is Kevin Brubaker. I'm the Deputy Director for the Environmental Law & Policy Center. I'm here in support of agenda Action Item 7A: the Resolution directing next steps to address the fiscal cliff.

As we all know, transit in Chicagoland is heading toward a fiscal cliff. Unless something is done, devastating service cuts will contribute to a downward spiral of public transit, endless gridlock, and worse air pollution.

Alternatively, bold action can lead to a renaissance for public transit in Chicagoland with a sustainable transit system, flourishing economy, and connected communities.

But we cannot chart this path blindly, we need data and expert analysis to understand the choices ahead, for lawmakers, transit planners, and the public as well.

As you all know, when federal COVID relief funds run out, the service boards are facing "an annual projected revenue gap of 20%." The RTA has anticipated that could translate to a 40% cut in transit service, but we have no idea what that might look like on the ground.

- How long will suburban residents have to wait for their Pace bus?
- Will Metra only run trains every two or three hours?
- Will CTA have to eliminate whole bus routes, thereby cutting off entire neighborhoods from service?
- We be able to afford to run trains on the Red Line extension?

Without some sense of the daily impacts, it's hard for people to wrap their heads around what this all means. Simply put, we can't manage what we don't measure.

Conversely, what could the alternatives look like? If lawmakers can develop \$1.5 billion in new funding to transform the system, as advocates and experts agree is needed, what is the vision for improving service? Which buses and trains will improve and how? Yesterday's RTA document provides the beginnings, but we need more detail.

The stakes are high. Transportation is now literally driving the climate crisis, and we must act to reduce its impact.

Northern Illinois cannot meet its climate goals without a robust public transit system. And we need clear data to get us there. I therefore urge passage of the proposed resolution listed at 7A on your agenda.