



Representing our members from coast to coast in solidarity.
One Voice. One Canada. One ATU!

Executive Board April 22, 2020

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The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister,

Re: Press Release - TRUMP SUPPORTS TRANSIT MORE THAN TRUDEAU

ATU Canada issued the above-mentioned press release today as it appears that your government has neglected the transit industry during this pandemic. A letter dated March 30th was sent to your Cabinet Committee on COVID-19 with a call for help. We regret that this call has not been answered and we now find ourselves faced with a growing number of transit agencies approaching bankruptcy.

The Federal Government must act now to save the transit system. Public Transit is a critical service that so many Canadians rely on and it must be saved.

Kindly see the attached press release and I look forward to your response.

The Amalgamated Transit Union is made up of 34,000 transit professionals in nine Canadian provinces. They represent vehicle operators, maintenance staff, paratransit operations, clerical staff, dispatchers, administrative professionals and workers in the over-the-road motor coach industry. The union was founded in 1892 and represents workers in Canada's urban, suburban and rural communities.

Sincerely,

John Di Nino
ATU Canada President
416 938 0746
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PRESS RELEASE

TRUMP SUPPORTS TRANSIT MORE THAN TRUDEAU: ATU

TORONTO April 22, 2020—Canada’s largest transit union is demanding that the Trudeau government explain why the Trump administration is doing more for public transit than Canada.

“Public transit is in crisis and the Trudeau government is watching it fall apart,” said ATU Canada President John Di Nino. “The government is ignoring that transit systems are moving a million people a day. Many of them are front-line workers. It’s time Justin Trudeau explained to them why Donald Trump is supporting transit more than he is. They deserve better and transit workers who face danger every day deserve better.”

Di Nino said transit workers are already getting layoff notices after weeks of putting themselves in danger to keep communities going. Despite transit agencies requesting emergency relief weeks ago, Air Canada is getting help as a non-essential service but transit systems have been pushed to the financial brink.

He said already-starved transit systems were on shaky financial footing before the pandemic. And inattention now will force many into insolvency. He called for funds to be directed to the municipalities that can only be used for municipal transit operations. This dedicated funding needs to flow directly and immediately.

“The shutdown of transit is a national emergency that requires emergency funding. We can’t be laying off critical transit workers. If Donald Trump can help, Justin Trudeau can deliver the \$5 billion relief transit systems and their riders need,” said President Di Nino. “Justin Trudeau can stop the shutdown of transit right now. And if not, he can explain to the million riders a day why he’s the Prime Minister who killed public transit in Canada.”

The ATU Canada President is drawing attention to national bailouts for transit operations in other jurisdictions and pointing out the extraordinary contrast between the \$25 billion provided to transit systems in the United States, Britain’s £400 million to keep buses running, and Hong Kong funding transit on a 50:50 matching basis.

“Donald Trump gets it. Boris Johnson gets it. The Hong Kong government cracking down on democracy protests gets it. When will Justin Trudeau get it, too?” Di Nino asked.



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Public transit is a critical service for addressing some of the most profound challenges in Canada: the climate crisis, and indeed, the growing affordability crisis. A bleak economic outlook will inevitably increase demand after the public health crisis recedes.

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