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March 27, 2024

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi
United States Congressman
2367 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Pace – FY 25 CPF Transit Infrastructure Grant – Hydrogen Bus (River Division)

Dear Congressman Krishnamoorthi:

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) supports Pace's request for Community Project Funding to purchase a hydrogen fuel cell bus to be used in the northwest suburbs and housed at Pace River Division in Elgin. The RTA conducts transit planning and oversees finances for the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra, and Pace, and serves as the taxing authority for Northeastern Illinois. The RTA has worked with the region's transit operators to improve public transportation for decades, and improving bus speed and reliability are key components of our regional strategy to provide a high-capacity, zero-emission transit network throughout Chicagoland.

The vision of *Transit is the Answer*, RTA's regional strategic plan, is safe, reliable, accessible public transportation that connects people to opportunity, advances equity, and combats climate change. The plan outlines 14 key Areas of Advocacy and Action that were co-created with stakeholders to guide priorities in areas like funding, safety, speed, and reliability. This project will help the region make progress towards our plan vision by reducing transit emissions and delivering reliable service to area residents.

When commuters ride public transit instead of driving their own cars, air quality improves, so investment in Pace is inherently beneficial for the environment. However, Pace recognizes their responsibility to reduce pollution as an operator of hundreds of buses in our region. In line with the emission reduction goals laid out in *Transit is the Answer*, Pace is committed to exploring clean technology and transitioning its fleet to become zero-emission by 2040, so funding is necessary to replace existing buses with new zero-emission vehicles, such as hydrogen fuel cell buses.

A new hydrogen powered vehicle will allow Pace to demonstrate this emerging technology for the first time in our region, while also benefitting Pace through reduced maintenance costs and expediting the eventual conversion of River Division to a fully zero-emission fleet. District 8 transit riders would benefit from a



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more modern, comfortable bus and the entire community would benefit from cleaner air. The investment in historically disadvantaged communities in the northwest suburbs also aligns with the Biden Administration's Justice40 initiative.

The RTA urges your full consideration of Pace's request under the applicable guidelines and looks forward to future deployment of zero-emission buses within the region's transit system.

Sincerely,

Leanne Redden
Executive Director