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May 12, 2021

Gateway Development Commission
2 Penn Plaza East
Newark, New Jersey 07105

New York Building Congress Comments to the Gateway Development Commission

The New York Building Congress continues its strong support of the Gateway Program, which remains the most urgent infrastructure project in the United States. As part of our comments for the March Commission meeting, we noted our call for President Biden and the Administration to honor their pledge for a \$1.3 trillion infrastructure package. Since that meeting, we are encouraged by the President's *American Rescue Plan*, which provides \$1.7 billion to Amtrak, and the *American Jobs Plan*, which proposes \$2 trillion to be invested in infrastructure nationwide, including rail corridors and transit lines. Both actions signal that our federal officials understand how imperative it is to invest in commuter rail.

The Gateway Program will work in concert with New York State's investments in and around Penn Station to create a world-class transportation rail hub and an expanded central business district in New York City. While the COVID-19 pandemic shut down most offices for more than a year and saw transit ridership plummet 90 percent, recent actions by the public and private sector demonstrate that New York is coming back and that we should take heed of this moment. With coronavirus cases falling precipitously and vaccination rates increasing substantially, 80,000 City workers began their return to office buildings on May 3rd and Governor Cuomo announced that the MTA would resume 24-hour subway service on May 17th. More recently, Goldman Sachs and JPMorgan Chase, two of the largest banks in New York, announced offices opening on a compulsory basis beginning in June and July, respectively. Companies large and small across the five boroughs are beginning to resume in-person work and we will no doubt begin to see a concurrent increase in ridership levels in our transit systems, including the Northeast Corridor (NEC).

We recognize that the pandemic has, as a matter of need, created more flexible options for workers. Remote-work policies have gained significant traction among major companies, with some extending their work-from-home policies even long after the pandemic is over. Nonetheless, we do not believe remote work policies will be the norm for most employers or industries long-term. With a return to in-person work will come a renewed call for personal space and on-time performance for daily commutes, two very important qualities that our failing transit infrastructure has not been able to provide for some time.

Gateway will be a cornerstone piece of 21st Century infrastructure that connects 20 percent of our nation's GDP. Its construction will dictate the next hundred years of our region. We cannot allow current economic trends to deter us as a nation from investing in our future. We must move forward with rebuilding and expanding our transit infrastructure. That said, we hope to see a Record of Decision on the Hudson Tunnel EIS be delivered soon so that we can begin work on the Gateway Program once funding is allocated.

Investing in the Gateway Program can pave the way for our country's economic success, for the benefit of Americans today and generations to come.

Very truly yours,

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

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