

## Investing in the Public Transportation Trust Fund

**Inadequate funding for public transportation keeps thousands of people across Alabama from meeting basic needs.** Unreliable bus systems cause people to be late for work, risking the loss of their jobs. If parents have a car that breaks down in rural Alabama, their children may miss doctors' appointments, school and other activities because public transit options are booked well ahead of time. Older Alabamians with no car may be unable even to buy groceries. Without reliable rides, people needing medical care miss check-ups and treatments, worsening Alabama's rural health crisis.

**Even when transit systems work, they fall far short of meeting public needs.** No public transit system in Alabama operates past 11 p.m., even on weekends. And many rural lines operate by appointment only from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays. Alabama must do more to meet the challenge of connecting its people to jobs, education and services.

**A 1952 amendment to Alabama's constitution (Amendment 93) makes it illegal to use state gasoline tax revenues for anything other than building and maintaining roads and bridges.** As a result, the most logical source of state funding for transit, a source all our neighboring states use, remains off limits in Alabama. Without dedicated state transit funding, Alabamians will continue to lack public transportation options that residents of other states enjoy. Building a modern public transit infrastructure certainly would provide a job-creating boost for economic development.

**The Alabama Public Transportation Trust Fund (PTTF),** created in 2018, could help fix our transit issues, but the Legislature has never funded it. The return on transit investment would make this a wise use of public funds. Every \$1 million invested in transit creates 49 full-time jobs, which are long-term jobs with good pay. A state appropriation of \$50 million would allow Alabama to harness up to \$200 million in federal matching funds for capital improvements, and it could double the investment for operations expenses.

**BOTTOM LINE: Alabama public transit needs state investment to provide the same services as our neighboring states. Now is the time to invest in public transportation and ensure all Alabamians can get where they need to go.**

## **Support SB 91 to fund public transit, increase workforce participation and improve lives**

- Alabama is late to the table on state funding for public transit. All four of our neighboring states fund public transportation.
- Our state leaves millions in federal matching funds on the table every year. The federal matching rate for capital improvements is up to 400% of state investment. For operations, federal grants can double state investment.
- Every \$1 million spent on operations creates 50 jobs. These jobs provide good benefits and an average operator's salary of more than \$70,000.
- Alabama's public transit options are limited because of the lack of public funds. No Alabama public transit service operates past 11 p.m., even on weekends.
- Companies and workers identify transportation needs as one of the biggest current barriers to workforce participation.

### **What would SB 91 do if passed?**

- Passing SB 91 would provide a dedicated funding source for public transit needs. SB 91 would provide about \$25 million in state funding each year to the Public Transportation Trust Fund (PTTF), which the state created in 2018 but has not yet funded.
- With the federal match, SB 91 would fuel up to \$125 million worth of transit projects every year. These investments would create high-quality, stable jobs and help build infrastructure to support Alabamians' workforce participation.
- Flexibility in the PTTF would allow the state to help stabilize struggling rural counties while also supporting infrastructure needs in rapidly growing regions.