

Attn: MPP Amarjot Sandhu, Chair of the Standing Committee on Finance & Economic Affairs

Date: December 1, 2020

Re: Written Submission on the *Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19 Act (Budget Measures)*, to the Standing Committee on Finance & Economic Affairs

Dear MPP Amarjot Sandhu,

On behalf of the Canadian Urban Transit Research and Innovation Consortium (CUTRIC), I would like to extend my sincere gratitude for giving stakeholders the opportunity to submit comments to the Standing Committee on Finance & Economic Affairs on the *Protect, Support and Recover from COVID-19 Act (Budget Measures)*, 2020.

Representing municipal transit agencies, businesses, utilities and researchers from across the entire transit supply chain, CUTRIC is a socially-responsible non-profit organization that spearheads, designs, and launches technology and commercialization projects that advance next-generation zero-carbon mobility and transportation solutions across Canada.

The Ontario Budget released last month includes significant investments in public transit. CUTRIC and its members welcomed the announcement of \$62.7 billion in funding for transit projects over ten years under the Ontario Capital Plan is welcomed. We are confident that this investment will position transit infrastructure as a central pillar in the province's COVID-19 economic recovery agenda.

Although the Budget supports many large transit projects, CUTRIC believes that a greater emphasis on innovative, clean forms of public transit is needed moving forward. Public transit plays an important role in making transportation more efficient and environmentally friendly. However, government, industry and academic researchers must invest in the right forms of public transit in order to accomplish both economic and environmental objectives and position Ontario as a national leader in innovative, clean technologies.

As the government seeks to position Ontario for post-pandemic recovery, CUTRIC recommends the province make greater investments in clean public transit innovation, such as zero-emissions buses (ZEBs), hydrogen fuel-cell electric buses (FCEBs) and autonomous vehicles. The **Ontario Hydrogen Strategy** is a promising step forward on this front and we look forward to contributing CUTRIC's hydrogen expertise in public transit by participating in future roundtables. CUTRIC also recommends the development of an **ACES Big Data Trust** to offer the next level of analysis for electric mobility in public transportation. CUTRIC's national real-time analysis of e-bus performance, charging patterns, energy and electricity loads, and energy intensity will help cities and transit agencies make empirically-sound deployment choices, optimizing fleet performance saving taxpayers money over the long run. The ACES Big Data Trust allows cities and transit agencies to engage in rapid and meaningful preventive measures in the future to support the robust deployment and effective integration of electric bus energy systems across Canada. At a cost of \$2.5 million, the ACES Big Data Trust represents a missed opportunity to support the development of a wider green transit network.

Last month's Budget has presented new growth opportunities for public transit in Ontario. CUTRIC and its members appreciate the provincial government's commitment to align public transit infrastructure with its COVID-19 economic rebuild. With that said, there is much work left to do to ensure that Ontario's future transit projects are better positioned to contribute to the province's environmental agenda. We look forward to working with the provincial government to promote these necessary investments in the upcoming 2021 provincial budget.

Sincerely,



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President and CEO of the Canadian Urban Transit Research and Innovation Consortium



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