



## **Week Without Driving Rural Message Guidance**

### **TOPLINE MESSAGE:**

Transit is essential. All Americans should be able to get to jobs, school, places of worship, and to see their friends and family affordably and conveniently. But the truth of the matter is for many people, their circumstances can limit their mobility. Maybe they don't have a car. Maybe they can't drive. Maybe the bus only comes once an hour. Or maybe there's no bus service at all.

Transit might look different in smaller towns and rural areas than in big cities. But it's no less of a lifeline. Public transit, like trains and buses, and accessible walking and bike routes, give us a healthy, clean, and affordable way for everyone to get around. But for too long, ensuring transit is fully funded has not been a priority for policymakers. We know what makes communities thrive.

By raising our voices together, we can design and demand an upgraded public transit system that not only connects and improves our neighborhoods but protects the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the land we call home, for generations to come.

The Week Without Driving will call attention to the urgent need to address our transit needs and ensure policymakers hear our voices.

### **SUPPORTING POINTS:**

- Transit is a key. And not just in big cities.
- Over a million Americans in small and rural communities do not have access to or the ability to operate a car. 1 in 3 households only have one car. These people are left struggling to access jobs, services, and community life. This results in barriers to recreation, employment, medical care, and basic services for those

most isolated from society like senior citizens, children, young adults, and veterans.

- Transit is a driver of economic growth, jobs, and opportunity. Nationally, tens of millions of people in the U.S.—from small rural towns to major urban centers—rely on public transit to get to work every day, generating trillions of dollars in economic activity. Every dollar invested in transit offers a 5-to-1 return, and every \$1 billion invested in public transit produces 50,000 jobs. Transit agencies are often among the largest employers in their cities.
- The climate crisis is not coming; it is here now. And it's getting worse by the day. We've seen it all around us on a near daily basis. It is impacting our economy and nearly every aspect of our daily lives. Investing in public transit is one of the top ways we can help address the climate crisis on the scale that is needed.
- The transportation sector is the largest source of U.S. climate pollution — and 80% of transportation emissions come from the [cars and trucks on our roads](#). It's one of the only major sectors where emissions are still [rising](#).
- For far too long, policymakers have prioritized highways and cars over public transit. This is particularly true in rural areas. This has devastating impacts not only for the climate crisis but on the budgets of local transit agencies like ours.
- An investment in transit by policymakers would be a win-win. A win economically and a win in our efforts to address the climate crisis.
- We will use the Week Without Driving to raise our collective voices and make sure policymakers at the local, state and national level hear us and invest in transit.