

# ***PRESS RELEASE...***

*... from the Illinois House of Representatives*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

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## **Feigenholtz rallies to save mass transit**

**CHICAGO** – Standing alongside Mayor Richard M. Daley, House Speaker Michael Madigan and a host of other local and state elected officials, Representative Sara Feigenholtz (D-Chicago) came out in support of Senate Bill 572 at a downtown rally today, marking the most aggressive push yet by community, business and civic leaders to address the region's beleaguered transit system.

"An affordable and efficient mass transit system is the lifeline of any vibrant city. Chicagoans depend on the CTA, Metra and Pace to get to work, to get to the grocery store and to take advantage of the many opportunities our city has to offer. If the State of Illinois fails to provide the transit agencies with the funding they so urgently need, that failure will affect nearly every facet of life for the thousands who rely on public transportation," Feigenholtz said.

For 2007, CTA, Metra and Pace have a combined budget shortfall of \$226 million. All transit agencies have approved contingency plans to increase fares and cut service should the state fail to provide them with funding.

Feigenholtz, who sits on the Mass Transit Committee in the House, supports a bipartisan Senate proposal calling for a regional sales tax increase for Cook and the collar counties, along with a new real estate transfer tax for the city of Chicago. If passed, SB 572 would generate roughly \$450 million for mass transit.

"Clearly, no one wants to raise taxes, but mass transit is such an important service to the residents of the six-county [Regional Transportation Authority] area. [SB 572] is a regional tax to be paid by those who depend on mass transit the most, while offering innumerable benefits to the state economy and environment as a whole and I think the fact that both Republicans and Democrats support this measure is proof of that," Feigenholtz added. "This is not about politics...our transit agencies will crumble unless the state acts responsibly and acts now."

The governor, who opposes raising any taxes, has promised to veto the legislation, but Rep. Julie Hamos (D-Evanston), chair of the House Mass Transit Committee and state Senator John Cullerton (D-Chicago), the chief co-sponsor of SB 572 in that chamber, have vowed to override the governor's veto.

The funding legislation, which passed unanimously in the Senate, requires 71 votes in the House to pass. The House is scheduled to vote on the measure one week from today.

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