

117TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 9647

To establish, maintain, and expand frequent, reliable, interconnected light rail transit service to expand racial, economic, and environmental justice, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 21, 2022

Ms. BUSH (for herself, Mr. LYNCH, Mr. BOWMAN, Mr. ESPAILLAT, Ms. OCASIO-CORTEZ, Ms. LEE of California, Ms. TLAIB, Ms. BARRAGÁN, and Mr. EVANS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

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## A BILL

To establish, maintain, and expand frequent, reliable, interconnected light rail transit service to expand racial, economic, and environmental justice, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Light Rail Transit  
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT PROGRAM.**

7 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 120 days after  
8 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Trans-

1 portation, acting through the Administrator of the Federal  
2 Transit Administration, shall establish a program to pro-  
3 vide grants to eligible public entities for the design and  
4 implementation of covered light rail transit systems.

5 (b) APPLICATION.—To be eligible for a grant under  
6 this section, an eligible public entity shall submit to the  
7 Secretary an application at such time, in such manner,  
8 and containing such information as the Secretary may re-  
9 quire.

10 (c) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible public entity receiv-  
11 ing a grant under this section may use such grant for—

12 (1) the design and implementation of a covered  
13 light rail transit system, including the design, acqui-  
14 sition, operations, maintenance, construction, and  
15 leasing of required supporting facilities, and integra-  
16 tion and improvement of other connected or nearby  
17 rail or bus corridors, bicycle infrastructure, and pe-  
18 destrian infrastructure;

19 (2) procuring and installing renewable energy  
20 to power train infrastructure;

21 (3) the redesign, retrofit, renovation, update,  
22 and repair of existing light rail systems to bring  
23 such systems up to the standard of covered light rail  
24 transit systems;

1           (4) training current employees to effectively op-  
2           erate, maintain, or otherwise adapt to new tech-  
3           nologies relating to a covered light rail transit sys-  
4           tem;

5           (5) operating costs to increase service fre-  
6           quencies on light rail transit routes that otherwise  
7           conform with this Act;

8           (6) reducing or eliminating fares as part of eli-  
9           gible projects; and

10          (7) public engagement and participatory plan-  
11          ning processes that meaningfully incorporate input  
12          from community members impacted by the covered  
13          light rail transit systems, including representatives  
14          from local labor organizations and other community  
15          groups, including those described subsection (d)(4).

16          (d) REQUIREMENTS.—As a condition of accepting a  
17          grant under this section, an eligible public entity (other  
18          than a Tribal authority) shall—

19               (1) agree to take steps, in consultation with  
20               community groups and tenant advocates, to secure  
21               existing housing in neighborhoods receiving benefits  
22               from such grant, including through the use of rent  
23               control, rent stabilization, or other methods to sta-  
24               bilize existing residents and prevent gentrification  
25               residential displacement;

1           (2) ensure safety for covered light rail transit  
2 systems funded by such a grant by employing Elec-  
3 tric Vehicle Infrastructure Training Program  
4 (EVITP)-certified electricians for the installation  
5 and maintenance of the electric components of the  
6 charging infrastructure;

7           (3) provide to the Secretary in the application  
8 for such a grant information on what such steps the  
9 entity will take and how the entity will carry out the  
10 activities described in paragraph (1);

11           (4) develop transit-oriented development plans  
12 for the area located around station stops that in-  
13 clude new affordable housing or public housing;

14           (5) provide to the Secretary a public engage-  
15 ment, outreach, and education plan that illustrates  
16 the grantee's commitment to meeting the mobility  
17 needs of the entire community that will be served by  
18 the covered light rail transit system, including strat-  
19 egies to incorporate input from local labor organiza-  
20 tions and other community groups, including envi-  
21 ronmental advocates, racial justice advocates, tenant  
22 advocates, youth advocates, transit advocates, and  
23 disability rights advocates; and

1           (6) certify that the covered light rail transit  
2           system funded by such grant shall operate on an ei-  
3           ther flat-fare or fare-free basis.

4           (e) PROHIBITION IN IMPACT ON FARES.—As a condi-  
5           tion on receipt of a grant under this section, an eligible  
6           public entity shall certify to the Secretary that the fares  
7           for riding the covered light rail transit system—

8           (1) shall not increase solely due to the improve-  
9           ments carried out with funds provided under this  
10          section; and

11          (2) shall not increase for any reason for at least  
12          1 year after the completion of the project funded  
13          under this section.

14          (f) PRIORITY FOR ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED  
15          COMMUNITIES.—In carrying out the program under this  
16          section, the Secretary shall prioritize projects located in  
17          economically disadvantaged communities.

18       **SEC. 3. SPECIAL RULES FOR TRIBES.**

19          (a) SET-ASIDE.—Contingent on sufficient qualifying  
20          applicants for grants under this Act that are Tribal au-  
21          thorities, the Secretary shall ensure that 5 percent of such  
22          grants are awarded to such applicants.

23          (b) CRITERIA FOR CONSIDERATION AS COVERED  
24          LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM.—With respect to a grants  
25          provided to a Tribal authority, notwithstanding section

1 5(2)(A), a transit system for which funds are provided  
2 under this Act shall be considered a covered light rail tran-  
3 sit system by meeting 4 of the criteria listed in sections  
4 5(2)(A)(x) and 7 of the criteria listed in section  
5 5(2)(A)(xi).

6 **SEC. 4. FUNDING REQUIREMENTS.**

7 (a) FEDERAL SHARE.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Federal share of a  
9 grant under this Act shall not exceed 85 percent.

10 (2) PROJECTS IN ECONOMICALLY DISADVAN-  
11 TAGED COMMUNITIES.—Notwithstanding paragraph  
12 (1), the Federal share for a project located in and  
13 benefitting an economically disadvantaged commu-  
14 nity may be up to 100 percent if the Secretary de-  
15 termines that—

16 (A) the project is part of an approved  
17 transportation plan required under sections  
18 5303 and 5304 of title 49, United States Code;  
19 and

20 (B) the applicant has, or will have—

21 (i) the legal, financial, and technical  
22 capacity to carry out the project, including  
23 the safety and security aspects of the  
24 project;

1 (ii) satisfactory continuing control  
2 over the use of the equipment or facilities;  
3 and

4 (iii) the technical and financial capac-  
5 ity to maintain new and existing equip-  
6 ment and facilities.

7 (b) PROHIBITION ON USE OF FUNDS.—None of the  
8 funds made available by this Act may be used to employ  
9 or otherwise enter into a contract for local, State, or Fed-  
10 eral law enforcement officers or fare collectors who are  
11 armed.

12 (c) SPECIAL RULE.—No financial assistance under  
13 chapter 53 of title 49, United States Code, may be used  
14 for an automated vehicle providing public transportation  
15 unless the recipient of such assistance that proposes to  
16 deploy an automated vehicle providing public transpor-  
17 tation certifies to the Secretary that the deployment does  
18 not eliminate or reduce the frequency of existing public  
19 transportation service.

20 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
21 authorized to be appropriated \$60,000,000,000 total for  
22 fiscal years 2024 through 2028 to carry out this Act.

23 **SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.**

24 In this Act:

1           (1) ELIGIBLE PUBLIC ENTITY.—The term “eli-  
2           gible public entity” means a local, Tribal, or State  
3           governmental authority, including metropolitan plan-  
4           ning organizations, transit agencies, port authorities,  
5           and regional entities, or multiple adjacent authori-  
6           ties submitting a joint application.

7           (2) COVERED LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM.—  
8           The term “covered light rail transit system” means  
9           a publicly owned light rail transit system that—

10                   (A) has—

11                           (i) accessibility for all customers, in-  
12                           cluding those who are physically, visually,  
13                           or hearing-impaired, as well as those with  
14                           temporary disabilities, the elderly, children,  
15                           parents with strollers, and other load-car-  
16                           rying passengers;

17                           (ii) all rail lines, routes, and stations  
18                           in system follow single unifying brand of  
19                           entire light rail transit system;

20                           (iii) functioning real-time and up-to-  
21                           date static passenger information system-  
22                           wide that is available during all hours of  
23                           operation;

24                           (iv) physical transfer points integrated  
25                           with other public transit;



1 (v) safe and accessible pedestrian de-  
2 sign at each station, with a continuous  
3 walking path network along the entire cor-  
4 ridor;

5 (vi) service frequency no less than 6  
6 trains per hour on all routes;

7 (vii) at least 3 elements out of—

8 (I) off board fare collection;

9 (II) traffic signal priority

10 (III) a system that includes mul-  
11 tiple routes or is connected to an ex-  
12 isting route;

13 (IV) a fare system that can be  
14 integrated with other modes of trans-  
15 port; or

16 (V) platform level boarding; and

17 (viii) at least 8 elements out of—

18 (I) multiple routes sharing cor-  
19 ridors;

20 (II) limited and express services;

21 (III) a full service control center;

22 (IV) location in 1 of the locality's  
23 top 10 demand corridors;

24 (V) late night and weekend serv-  
25 ice;

1 (VI) 90 percent of stations offer  
2 seating, are weather-protected, well-  
3 lit, and at least 8 feet wide;

4 (VII) all stations have sliding  
5 doors;

6 (VIII) secure bicycle parking at  
7 least in higher-demand stations and  
8 standard bicycle racks elsewhere;

9 (IX) bicycle lanes on or parallel  
10 to 75 percent of the corridor;

11 (X) bicycle sharing available at  
12 50 percent or more of stations;

13 (XI) elimination or prohibition on  
14 parking minimums in the area of the  
15 system; and

16 (XII) service frequency of no less  
17 than 7 trains per hour on all routes;

18 (B) powers trains and train infrastructure  
19 with renewable energy;

20 (C) uses labor standards at least as protec-  
21 tive as the labor standards described in section  
22 5333 of title 49, United States Code; and

23 (D) meets domestic assembly qualifications  
24 for its trains.

1           (3) DOMESTIC ASSEMBLY QUALIFICATIONS.—

2           The term “domestic assembly qualifications” means,  
3           with respect to any qualifying train, that the final  
4           assembly of such a train occurs at a plant, factory,  
5           or other place which is located in the United States  
6           and operating under a collective bargaining agree-  
7           ment negotiated by an employee organization (as de-  
8           fined in section 412(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue  
9           Code of 1986), determined in a manner consistent  
10          with section 7701(a)(46) of such Code.

11          (4) ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED COMMU-

12          NITY.—The term “economically disadvantaged com-  
13          munity” means an economically disadvantaged com-  
14          munity, including an environmental justice commu-  
15          nity, an underserved community, or a community lo-  
16          cated in an area of persistent poverty (as such term  
17          is defined in section 101 of title 23, United States  
18          Code).

19          (5) PLATFORM LEVEL BOARDING.—The term

20          “platform level boarding” means a platform for  
21          boarding a train that contains no more than 0.5  
22          inch vertical gap between the train floor and the sta-  
23          tion platform.

1           (6) RENEWABLE ENERGY.—The term “renew-  
2           able energy” means solar, wind, geothermal, and  
3           tidal energy.

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