

March 27th, 2023

Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor
State of New York
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Majority Leader and President Pro Tempore
New York State Senate
Legislative Office Building, Room 907
Albany, NY 12247

Honorable Carl E. Heastie
Speaker
New York State Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 932
Albany, NY 12248

Dear Governor Hochul, Leader Stewart-Cousins, and Speaker Heastie:

We write in support of the automated bus lane enforcement (ABLE) program. The ABLE program helps improve the speed and performance of Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) buses, which hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers rely on each day. Too often, buses are slowed to a crawl when designated lanes are obstructed. This can be particularly impactful on members of New York's disability and older adult communities. This is especially important because all of New York's buses are designed to be ADA-accessible, while just 27% of subway stations are accessible. We, the undersigned Council Members, support making the ABLE program permanent and expanding MTA and New York City Department of Transportation (NYC DOT) authority to enforce additional traffic violations where MTA buses operate.

Accordingly, we support the Governor's proposal (Part A of S.4008-A/A.4008-A) to make the ABLE program permanent and give MTA and NYC DOT authorization to launch a five-year demonstration program that would allow them to enforce double-

parking, bus stop violations, bike lane violations, and bus lane violations that impede bus operations. The Senate's one-house budget accepted the Governor's proposal with only minor technical amendments. We support an enacted FY 2024 State Budget that accepts the Governor's proposal as well.

The MTA and NYC DOT have over a decade's worth of data demonstrating that automated bus lane enforcement helps reduce illegal obstruction of designated bus lanes. For example, in 2022, 86% of violators committed only one violation, 9% committed two violations, and only 5% committed more than two. Moreover, the percentage of violators with multiple violations in the same quarter dropped from 22% in Q2 2020 to 10% by Q3 2022.

As the number of ABLE-enforced bus lanes grows, low recidivism numbers reflect its success in keeping vehicles out of bus lanes and capturing chronic violations by delivery vehicles. The data also reflects changes in driver behavior as a result of consistent enforcement. Further, we are seeing safety benefits beyond improved bus speeds and reliability.

For example, since implementing ABLE in October 2019, ABLE-enforced sections of the B44 SB have seen a major decrease in collisions. Through February 2023, 12-month collisions are down 20% compared to before implementation. The sections without ABLE are up 11%.

The ABLE program is a constructive, multi-agency, City-State collaboration. New York City Department of Finance helps to administer the program, and NYC DOT uses its own stationary cameras as well. We appreciate the State Legislature's commitment to the automated bus lane camera enforcement program over the past several years and believe that the current proposal is a critical step forward to the benefit of all New Yorkers. Not only will ABLE continue to enhance the way riders experience bus service, but improved reliability has the potential to significantly boost ridership.

We note, as always, the crucial importance of prioritizing equity in the continued rollout of ABLE. The Council and City will monitor the impacts of this program on underserved communities and work with the MTA to make adjustments that meet the needs of our neighborhoods. The City also recognizes our shared responsibility to protect the privacy of drivers, pedestrians, and all others in public space. We expect to have an active oversight role in this respect and will work to ensure these cameras are not unduly invasive in the lives of New Yorkers.

During a time in which investments in mass transit are sorely needed to ensure accessible and safe service, we urge you to include ABLE in the enacted budget. We look forward to working with you to continue delivering bus service improvements across the city.

Sincerely,



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Council Member
District 35, Brooklyn



Alexa Avilés
Council Member
District 38, Brooklyn



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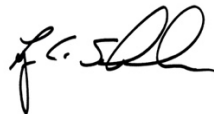
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