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Governor Buys Time With Federal Funds

As oil approaches \$100 per barrel, and Chicago seeks to host the 2016 Summer Olympics, one would expect smart leaders to strengthen Illinois' public transit system. Sadly, Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich and the Illinois General Assembly are doing just the opposite.

Legislative egos and infighting are threatening to destroy the Illinois transit system, starting with the Chicago Transit Authority and the Pace suburban bus system. They've known for over three years that funding for public transit must be fixed. They've done nothing.

On Friday, Gov. Blagojevich pulled another Band-Aid out of his hat, offering \$27 million in federal capital funds to CTA and Pace to stave off "doomsday" service cuts and fare hikes yet again, despite a promise to find a solution before today.

"Transit riders are tired of this mistreatment," said Rick Harnish, Executive Director of the Transit Riders' Alliance. "The legislature and Gov. Blagojevich now have until Dec. 31 to come up with a real plan."

"The new plan must include a major capital infusion," said Harnish. "It must include new buses statewide, increasing service on the underserved Metra Electric line, and expanding Amtrak service throughout the state."

"The reason there are no toilets on Metra Electric trains is because the legislature has failed to act on a capital program for transit. Red Line trains are slow is because the legislature has failed to act. It's time for the legislature to enact a real capital program for transit, not just for the Chicago area, but statewide," said Rick Harnish, executive director of the Transit Riders' Alliance.

The Transit Riders Alliance is a project of the Midwest High Speed Rail Association, a member-supported non-profit educational organization promoting the development of fast, frequent and dependable train service connecting the entire Midwest. Our members include business leaders, mayors and individuals that want real travel choice.