

**Testimony on A3895, the Urban Transit Hub Tax Credit Act****May 7, 2009**

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I am Chris Sturm from New Jersey Future, the nonprofit smart growth research and advocacy organization.

We strongly support state incentives to promote development near transit. Our research, which is summarized in this report, "Getting to Work," found that many of our cities with good transit access have been losing jobs since 1980. Meanwhile, job growth has occurred primarily in suburban locations where commuters often have no choice but to drive to work. The bill you are considering today will help reverse this trend by attracting jobs to transit-rich locations. This brings at least three other important benefits to New Jersey:

1. It will alleviate traffic congestion by giving people convenient alternatives to driving. Experience has shown that if good transit service is available, people will take it. For example 71% of New Jerseyans working in Manhattan take the train, as do 24% of our commuters to Philadelphia. But only 5% of people who work in New Jersey now take the train.
2. The bill will strengthen our cities with new ratables and give city residents better access to jobs.
3. It will position New Jersey for a sustainable future by reducing both our dependence on foreign oil and greenhouse gas emissions from driving.

We understand that the Urban Transit Hub Tax Credit Act is a pilot program. As the state gains experience with it, New Jersey Future looks forward to working with you to expand these benefits to additional transit hubs, based on criteria outlined in our report, such as connectivity to multiple rail lines, and high passenger ridership. We also look forward to working with you on the other half of the equation when it comes to taking advantage of our excellent transit system – and that is getting more housing built near transit. The Smart Housing Incentives Act has been introduced in both houses and would create a voluntary program of incentives for towns that plan for walkable neighborhoods near transit, downtowns and other developed areas.

In summary, New Jersey Future strongly supports targeting state incentives to locations near transit and we urge you to support this bill.