



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Long Wait Times Leave Transit Riders Out In The Cold

MILWAUKEE, WI — With this year's record cold temperatures, transit riders have been forced to brave the cold while waiting for the bus. In Milwaukee, where transit service has decreased by one third since 2000, riders have found themselves waiting significantly longer than they did years ago.

While Milwaukee's service has dwindled significantly, other cities manage to continue to provide robust service for riders. The Minneapolis Metro Transit System provided nearly twice as much service as MCTS in 2012. Nick DeMarsh, an organizer with the Milwaukee Transit Riders Union explains, "While this difference in service levels is an embarrassment for our community and is a drag on our economy, most importantly it has a significant impact on the day to day lives of transit riders."

Transit advocates in Milwaukee are concerned about the health of riders in this brutal cold. Kieth Crum, fellow transit organizer says "With numerous wind-chill advisories and warnings this winter, State and County leadership can no longer ignore the suffering of transit riders." To address this issue he explains, "We would like to see funding for more frequent trips, more bus shelters and heated shelters at key locations in addition to other possible improvements."

While there's a lot of talk about who will run the system, the key is really whether or not the community is willing to stand up and fund the system. The Texas based MV Transportation Inc., has submitted a low ball proposal to manage MCTS, which has raised a lot of questions about how they could afford to operate with their proposed budget. County Executive Abele has recently suggested that MV may have to cut drivers' pay in order to save costs. This will likely affect bus reliability and safety of riders, as seen in Fairfield, CA where MV was cited 295 times for poor performance. DeMarsh concludes "There's no gimmick to fixing our system, it's a matter of whether or not State and County leaders care about riders."

Transit advocates will reach out to riders Wednesday February 19th from 8:30am - 10:00am along West Wisconsin Avenue to hear testimonies of how long wait times have affected riders this winter.

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