



June 3, 2009

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Room H-218, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey:

I write on behalf of the 1,500 member organizations of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) to ask for your support for the inclusion of §1202 of S.1054, the Senate Supplemental Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2009 (FY2009) in the final version of the legislation. This provision would allow public transportation agencies who receive funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) to apply 10 percent of those funds toward “operating costs of equipment and facilities for use in public transportation.”

Public transportation providers throughout the country are struggling with the severe impacts of the economic crisis, as they witness their state and local revenue sources being significantly reduced. This provision will provide public transportation providers with access to extremely important funding flexibility at a time when record numbers of Americans are turning to public transportation for their daily transportation needs. Many agencies have been forced to substantially increase fares and drastically reduce service. At a time when more and more people are turning to our systems for the cost-effective, environmentally sustainable mobility option offered by public transportation, we can ill afford to reduce service. Transit saves the U.S. 4.2 billion gallons of gasoline each year, the equivalent of more than 11 million gallons per day. Public transportation services should not be cut when the United States is attempting to reduce its levels of energy consumption.

The goals of ARRA were to save and create jobs and, among other things, invest in our transportation infrastructure. The investment provided for public transportation and high-speed and intercity passenger rail infrastructure is having its intended impact. However, the limited flexibility sought through §1202 will enhance the ability of public transportation officials to meet the goals of the Act by directly preserving jobs and assisting agencies to better manage scarce resources at this difficult time.

Thank you again for your support of public transportation’s role in economic recovery. If you have questions, please contact Brian Tynan of APTA's Government Affairs Department at (202) 496-4897 or email btynan@apta.com.

Sincerely yours,

William Millar
President

WWM/tjj

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