



July 16, 2009

The Honorable Jim Oberstar
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Oberstar:

I am writing to you on behalf of the 1,500 member organizations of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) to express our strong support for your efforts to make enactment of a long-term public transportation and highway program authorization a top congressional priority. Continued progress toward a long-term bill is important to the public transportation industry. We do not want to see multiple short-term extensions, as was the case with the SAFETEA-LU process, but urge Congress to act on a long-term authorization bill as quickly as possible.

The next surface transportation authorization has the potential to be one of the most effective ways for Congress to create millions of jobs and stimulate our ailing economy. Its enactment could ensure that much needed long-term capital investments are initiated and procurements for rolling stock and other system needs advance. Public transportation spending helps address the growing demand for transit service, and it also produces good jobs in the private sector. The long-term authorization of these programs will truly advance needed economic benefits and the predictability our project sponsors and private sector partners need. Wall Street and the financial sector look to enactment of this bill as an indicator on risk and opportunity. These financial indicators impact both project development and financial support needed for manufacturers.

APTA is concerned that a long-term extension of current law will only delay much needed reforms to the current program, like expediting the development of new starts projects and addressing the need for an adequate source of dedicated funding. We support the quickest possible action on a long-term authorization bill. Enactment of a bill that provides project sponsors and businesses the financial guidance they need for long-term planning and forecasting is essential.

While we recognize the extensive list of items on the current legislative agenda, I strongly encourage you to continue to make the long-term authorization of our nation's surface transportation programs a top priority. The public transportation industry and I stand ready to assist you in this regard.

Sincerely,

William Millar
President

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