



March 9, 2010

The Honorable John Spratt
Chairman
House Committee on the Budget
207 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Spratt:

On behalf of the more than 1,400 member organizations of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), I urge you to provide a robust funding allocation for federal public transportation programs and high-speed and intercity rail as the House Budget Committee develops the Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 budget resolution.

The top legislative priority for APTA and its members is passage of a full, robust, and long-term surface transportation authorization bill that provides substantially increased federal investment for public transportation. The long-term planning and budgeting needs of public transportation agencies and their private sector partners depend on the certainty of long-term funding. In addition, a long-term transportation authorization bill will have a tremendous impact on job creation across the country. Every \$1 billion in public transportation investment supports and creates 36,000 high-quality “green” jobs. Furthermore, the investments enable our nation to meet important mobility and environmental goals.

While Congress continues to debate a new surface transportation authorization bill, it is important that the annual budget and appropriations keep pace with state and local public transportation needs. APTA’s recommendations for federal surface transportation law call for the Federal Transit Program to be funded at a level of \$14.89 billion in Fiscal Year 2011. This level would address critical needs tied to the state of good repair of U.S. transit systems and meet important safety priorities. This funding would also support transit system expansion needs and enable transit providers to meet the goal of doubling public transportation ridership by 2020. APTA’s estimate of the total annual resources needed to maintain and improve our public transportation systems, from all sources, is \$59.2 billion. This level of investment assumes ridership growth of just over 3.5 percent annually. In its “Bottom Line Report for Transportation – 2009,” the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials agrees with APTA’s estimate, stating that “if transit ridership growth grows to 3.5 percent, the level that would double transit ridership over the next 20 years, which would be helpful in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, investment in public transportation would have to grow to \$59 billion.”

Additionally, APTA is increasingly concerned that funding is not being proposed in the Administration’s annual budgets to support the implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC) systems as mandated by the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (RSIA). Commuter and intercity passenger railroads, as well as certain freight railroads, must have PTC systems implemented by the end of 2015. The estimated cost of implementing PTC on public commuter railroads alone is estimated to exceed \$2 billion. It is important that these needs be considered when the Committee provides an allocation to Function 400.

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APTA also appreciates the Administration's continued commitment to investment in high-speed and intercity passenger rail. We urge Congress to provide a minimum level funding at the Fiscal Year 2010 level of \$2.5 billion which will enable the Department of Transportation to move forward aggressively on critical corridor plans. APTA's recommendations for surface transportation authorization recommendations call for a separate High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail title which authorizes no less than \$50 billion (from sources other than the Highway Trust Fund) during the next six years to facilitate the development of a transformational domestic High-Speed and Intercity Rail system. Investing in high-speed rail is essential for our country's future. Not only will high-speed rail provide faster and quicker travel, but it will create American jobs now while building a new industry with hundreds of thousands of long-term, sustainable jobs.

We thank you for considering APTA's views. 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,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "William Millar".

William Millar
President

WM/tjj