



April 15, 2010

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

Dear Chairman Obey:

On behalf of the nearly 1,500 member organizations of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), I write in support of a robust funding allocation for federal public transportation programs and high-speed and intercity rail in the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year (FY) 2011.

As the Appropriations Committee works to adopt the FY 2011 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill, we urge you to provide no less than \$14.89 billion for federal public transportation programs. This level is consistent with APTA's recommendations for FY 2011 under the next surface transportation authorization bill. APTA also urges the committee to fund the Rail Safety Technology Grants program (Section 105) of the Rail Safety Improvement Act (RSIA) at a level significantly higher than the \$50 million annual authorization and to appropriate the unfunded FY 2009 authorization (also \$50 million), in order to assist commuter rail agencies with the implementation of positive train control systems in time to meet federally mandated deadlines. Finally, we urge Congress to provide at least \$2.5 billion – the level provided by Congress in Fiscal Year 2010 - for high-speed and intercity rail programs.

While Congress continues to work on a new surface transportation authorization bill, it is important that the annual budget and appropriations keep pace with public transportation needs. APTA's recommendations for federal surface transportation law call for a Federal Transit Program of \$14.89 billion in Fiscal Year 2011. This level would begin to address critical needs tied to the state of good repair of U.S. transit systems and help 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. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) agrees with APTA's estimate, stating in its "Bottom Line Report for Transportation – 2009" that "if transit ridership grows yearly by 3.5 percent, investment would have to increase to \$59 billion annually."

Additionally, APTA is concerned that funding is not being proposed in the Administration's annual budgets to support the implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC) systems which are mandated under the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008. 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. In order to assist agencies in meeting the mandate, the RSIA also authorized \$50 million annually from Fiscal Years 2009 to 2013. APTA urges the committee to provide funding at a level significantly above the level

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authorized for FY 2011 and we ask that you also appropriate the unfunded FY 2009 authorization.

Finally, we are disappointed that the Administration has only requested \$1 billion for high-speed and intercity passenger rail. A minimum of \$2.5 billion – the Fiscal Year 2010 level – should be appropriated. This 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) over 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.

APTA's top priority remains the passage of a full, six-year surface transportation authorization bill. In the absence of this legislation, however, it is critical that the annual appropriation for public transportation keep pace with the industry's growing needs. Significant growth is required to address important safety needs, which include efforts to maintain a state of good repair of transit assets. In addition, as transit projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) near completion, continued substantial investment is needed to maintain the progress in infrastructure development and the jobs that were created. 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.

We thank you for considering APTA's views. Further details on APTA's priorities for the FY 2011 Transportation HUD Appropriations bill will be submitted as testimony to the subcommittee. 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

WM/tjj