



July 28, 2010

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the more than 1,500 member organizations and businesses of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), I commend you on your July 20 announcement that the federal government will reduce its greenhouse gas emissions 13 percent by 2020, in part by encouraging federal workers to use public transportation.

Public transportation's role in reducing America's carbon emissions is significant. APTA's Carbon Savings Calculator and Transit Savings Calculator, both available at www.publictransportation.org, allow Americans to see precisely how much greenhouse gas emissions they can reduce and how much money they can save by riding public transit. This web site also has lists of and links to local public transit systems across the nation.

Studies have shown that public transit use makes a significant difference in reducing our carbon footprint.

- Communities that invest in public transit reduce the nation's carbon emissions by 37 million metric tons annually: equivalent to households in New York City; Washington, DC; Atlanta; Denver; and Los Angeles combined stopping using electricity.
- One person switching to public transit can reduce daily carbon emissions by 20 pounds, or more than 4,800 pounds in a year.
- A single commuter switching his or her commute to public transportation can reduce a household's carbon emissions by 10 percent, or up to 30 percent if he or she eliminates a second car. When compared to other household actions that limit carbon emissions, taking public transportation can be 10 times greater in reducing this harmful greenhouse gas.

To provide greater access to public transit service, I urge your Administration to pursue enactment of a new, well-funded multi-year surface transportation authorization bill as quickly as possible.

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President
William Millar

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July 28, 2010
Page 2

A recent study by the Federal Transit Administration found that \$77.7 billion of new investment is needed to bring our nation's bus and rail systems up to a "state of good repair." Transit systems across the nation are struggling to find dollars to upgrade and expand aging facilities and infrastructure, while keeping adequate service levels at affordable fares. Only a long-term bill can address these urgent needs.

Climate legislation could help pay for a transportation bill if carbon-based revenue from motor fuels is dedicated to new investment in public transportation and other emission-reducing infrastructure investments.

The Administration should also champion efforts to maintain and expand access to transit commuter benefits. The federal government can reduce its carbon footprint far more effectively with public transit if federal tax law and the employee benefits for federal workers encourage transit use. At present, federal agencies in the National Capital Region must offer up to \$230 a month to employees for their commute by transit or vanpool. In addition, all federal employees of the Departments of Transportation and Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency, regardless of where they are located, must be offered the benefit. This employer-paid benefit should be made available to every federal employee in the nation.

Action is also needed to maintain parity between mass transit commuter benefits and parking commute benefits. The maximum monthly level of employer-paid transit benefit and employee-paid, pre-tax transit benefit will shrink from \$230 a month to \$120 a month, losing parity with parking tax benefits, when provisions from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act expire at the end of this year. I hope you will see the value in providing permanent parity between mass transit commuter benefits and parking tax benefits.

Again, thank you for your strong leadership in recognizing the link between using public transportation and helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

With your continued efforts and quick action by Congress to extend the commuter tax benefit and to expand the federal transit benefit to all federal employees, more Americans can heed your call to do their part for a cleaner, greener America.

We at the American Public Transportation Association stand ready to assist you.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Millar", written in a cursive style.

William Millar
President

cc:

The Honorable Ray LaHood

The Honorable Peter Rogoff

The Honorable Joseph Szabo

The Honorable Lisa Jackson

The Honorable Carol Browner