



May 4, 2011

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Highways & Transit
House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
B-375 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative DeFazio:

On behalf of the nearly 1,500 member organizations of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), I write in strong support of the “Providing Gas Price Relief Through Public Transportation Act of 2011.” I applaud your proposal to expand access to public transportation as a key strategy to help commuters cope with the high price of gasoline, and to reduce fuel consumption in our nation.

As gas prices approach four dollars per gallon in the United States, access to public transportation alternatives is one of the quickest and easiest ways for Americans to avoid the high cost of gas if they have transit available. APTA recently released a report which shows that riding public transportation saves individuals, on average, \$10,116 annually and \$843 per month – an amount that increases as gas prices continue to escalate.

While it is clear that access to transit is critical, not enough Americans have access to public transportation services. In fact, it is estimated that 46 percent of all American households have no access to public transportation. At the same time, demand for public transportation services is at an all time high. Unfortunately, at a time where operating costs continue to increase, resources from local, state and federal resources are shrinking. The result is that public transit systems all over the country are being forced to consider service cuts or fare increases as a way to balance their operating budgets. I am pleased that your proposal would provide critical resources to transit systems to help them maintain current levels of service and avoid fare increases during this difficult time.

I also support the legislation’s goal of reducing consumption of gasoline in our nation by promoting the use of alternative fuels transit vehicles, expanding the availability of transit benefits to all federal employees, and establishing a vanpool pilot program. These and other strategies to increase the use of public transportation will not only help reduce congestion, but also help to reduce our nation’s reliance on foreign oil. The use of public transportation currently saves 4.2 billion gallons of gasoline per year – savings that would increase as transit use increases.

I appreciate your continued dedication to public transportation, and look forward to working with you to implement this important legislation.

Sincerely,

William Millar
President

WM/tjj

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