



May 11, 2011

The Honorable Earl Blumenauer  
1502 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Blumenauer:

On behalf of the more than 1,500 member organizations of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), I applaud your proposal to help individuals and families cope with rising gasoline prices by making it easier for Americans to travel without a car for some trips. The "Commuter Relief Act" proposes simple, no-cost changes to federal law to make riding transit, using a bicycle, or participating in a vanpool easier and more convenient. Improving access to transportation choices that save consumers money and require less imported oil is an essential strategy for our nation to become more energy independent.

APTA particularly applauds the proposal to equalize the mass transit commuter tax benefit with the parking tax benefit that is available to commuters who drive. Parity between the two tax benefits is set to expire on December 31, 2011, and the tax savings for transit benefit will fall significantly below the level of the parking benefit. Failure to extend parity will effectively raise taxes on participating transit riders and employers at a time when we should be encouraging transit ridership for the energy, economic, and quality of life benefits it provides. Furthermore, federal tax law should not show a bias for one means of commuting over another. The "Commuter Relief Act" provides permanent parity between the tax benefits, establishing fair, long-term tax savings for participating transit riders and employers.

Providing more transportation choices will help Americans combat the high price of gasoline, and it will reduce our dependence on imported fuel. Without public transportation services, American travelers would have suffered an additional 785 million hours of delay and consumed 640 million more gallons of fuel in 2009, according to Texas Transportation Institute's Urban Mobility Report. If a household can live with one less car and ride public transportation more, a family can save, on average, \$9,682 annually.

APTA applauds this proposal and looks forward to working with you to advance this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely yours,

William Millar  
President

WM/tjj

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