



June 23, 2011

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
Vice President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Vice President:

On behalf of the 1,500 member organizations of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), I write to strongly urge that negotiations regarding the nation's debt limit and plan for deficit reduction result in increased federal investment in transportation infrastructure. Failure to raise revenues for transportation is likely to result in at least a 30 percent reduction from current investment levels in surface transportation programs at a time when we cannot afford to make such cuts. Without adequate investment in the nation's transportation infrastructure, we jeopardize the fragile economic recovery as our infrastructure continues to deteriorate.

In recent years two congressionally chartered commissions, the National Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission and the National Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission, have painstakingly documented the investment shortfall in surface transportation and recommended sensible solutions. The Simpson-Bowles Deficit Reduction Commission also called for increasing transportation infrastructure investment and generating the appropriate revenues to fund that investment. Minimal changes to the collection of federal motor fuel user fees in a new surface transportation bill could easily eliminate the small amount of deficit spending in these programs and put the nation back on track to meet current and emerging transportation infrastructure needs.

The current needs of public transportation are considerable: A 2010 report by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) concludes that \$77.7 billion of investment is required to achieve a state of good repair for existing public transportation systems, with an additional \$14.4 billion annual investment to maintain them. Given the demonstrated need, a 30 percent reduction in public transit investment would have dire consequences. Such cuts would force the termination of thousands of projects already underway that are needed in the years ahead to both maintain a state of good repair and build capacity for millions of new riders. The more immediate impacts of a halt in project development and construction are job losses, a bigger backlog of state of good repair projects, and the inability for public transit systems to meet service demands as riders try to avoid high gas prices.

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William Millar

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Public transit investment is a proven driver of economic growth. Federal investment in public transit is an excellent deal for the American taxpayer, with a return on investment of 4 to 1. Every \$1 billion invested in public transit creates or supports 36,000 jobs, and public transit investment is a clear strategy to reduce our dependence on imported oil, reduce congestion on our roadways, and offer more transportation choices to Americans.

We understand that the purpose of these negotiations is to set the nation on a fiscally sustainable path to future economic growth and prosperity and we appreciate that the Obama Administration has highlighted infrastructure investment as a signature issue. We believe that these investments must be made and made now. Failure to invest in our infrastructure now will cost the nation more later on, and failure to raise revenues to pay for this critical infrastructure will ultimately result in more, not less, deficit spending. If job creation and increased economic competitiveness are truly priorities of the government leaders participating in these discussions, transportation infrastructure investment should be at the top of the list of options under consideration.

We appreciate your leadership and we look forward to working with Congress to ensure that the necessary revenue is generated to support the nation's transportation infrastructure needs.

Sincerely yours,

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

William Millar
President

WM/mls

cc: The Honorable Ray LaHood, U.S. Secretary of Transportation