



September 29, 2011

The Honorable Patty Murray
Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction Co-chair
United States Senate
448 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction Co-chair
United States House of Representatives
129 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Murray and Representative Hensarling:

On behalf of the 1,500 member organizations of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), I write to strongly urge that negotiations regarding national plans for deficit reduction result in increased federal investment in transportation infrastructure.

APTA understands that the purpose of these negotiations is to reduce the federal deficit to assure future economic growth and prosperity. While spending cuts may appear to be the obvious solution in the short-term, failure to invest in our infrastructure now through long-term reauthorization of surface transportation programs will cost the country more in the years ahead. Increasing economic growth while also increasing global competitiveness should be central tenets in your discussions. Investing in the nation's infrastructure will do just that.

In recent years, two bipartisan commissions created by Congress, the National Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission and the National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission, painstakingly documented this country's investment shortfall in surface transportation and recommended sensible solutions. In addition, both the Simpson-Bowles Deficit Reduction Commission and the Senate's "Gang of Six" have previously called for increasing transportation infrastructure investment and generating the revenues needed to fund that investment. While modest changes to the collection of federal motor fuels fees would help bridge the gap in our investment levels, this is only one of many ways to generate the needed revenues for transportation infrastructure.

Current needs for 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. Beyond that, research has shown that capital investment from all sources: federal, state, and local – should be doubled if we are to expand the system to meet future ridership demands.

Given this demonstrated need, it is critical that you oppose drastic cuts in surface transportation, and instead address the growing problem of revenue shortfalls for the transportation trust funds. Cuts to surface transportation spending would force the shutdown of thousands of projects already underway that are needed 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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Transportation programs account for less than three percent of the federal budget, yet support or create more than 2.5 million jobs annually. Every \$1 billion invested in public transportation capital and operations support an average of 36,000 jobs. With this in mind, we thank you for your leadership and look forward to working with you and other Members of Congress to ensure that the federal budget deficit and debt are addressed, while at the same time ensuring that job creation, economic growth, and a more competitive nation result.

Sincerely yours,



William Millar
President

WM/tjj

cc: Senator Max Baucus
Representative Xavier Becerra
Representative Dave Camp
Representative Jim Clyburn
Senator John Kerry
Senator Jon Kyl
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