

The Commuter Benefits Work for Us Coalition

September 10, 2013

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner,

We the undersigned organizations urge you to support passage of legislation to establish permanent parity between the parking and transit portions of the commuter benefit. Legislation to establish parity has been introduced in both the U.S. Senate (S.1116, the "Commuter Benefits Equity Act") and the House of Representatives (H.R. 2288, the "Commuter Parity Act").

At the beginning of this year, as part of the American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012, Congress enacted a provision to increase the transit portion of the commuter benefit to \$240 per month. A subsequent IRS cost-of-living adjustment raised the limit to \$245 per month. This important legislation re-established parity between the parking and transit benefits to provide commuters who choose public transportation the same tax savings as those who drive to work. However, this increase is only temporary. Unless Congress acts this year to establish permanent parity, or at the very least further extend the temporary increase, the transit portion of the benefit will plunge to almost half the level of the parking benefit.

A decrease in the transit portion of the commuter benefit will result in an increased tax burden for workers who rely on public transportation for their daily commutes. For example, a working family that takes advantage of the full allowable monthly pre-tax deduction for transit in 2013 could pay as much as \$500 more next year in federal taxes without legislation to maintain the current level of the transit benefit. This is a significant cost increase that many Americans simply cannot afford. The reduction in the monthly transit limit will also result in an increase in payroll taxes for many businesses that offer the benefit – important resources that could be reinvested in the economy to create new jobs.

Failure to adopt this important legislation prior to December 31, 2013 will establish a federal policy that will encourage commuters to drive to work, rather than use public transportation. This will result in increased traffic congestion on our roads, a rise in our nation's reliance on foreign fuel imports, and more pollution.

In the coming weeks, Congress will have the opportunity to take action to maintain parity in the parking and transit portions of the commuter benefit as it considers important tax-related legislation. As you work to address many of the important issues that face our nation, we urge you to not forget the more than 2.7 million commuting Americans that rely on the transit commuter benefit and work to pass legislation that will ensure that transit riders can continue to afford their commute to work.

Sincerely,

National Organizations

Association for Commuter Transportation
Amalgamated Transit Union, AFL-CIO/CLC
American Public Transportation Association
American Payroll Association
Commuter Benefits Work for Us Coalition
Edenred USA
Employers Council on Flexible Compensation
National Association of Counties
Natural Resources Defense Council
SmartGrowth America
Transportation for America
TransitCenter
The United States Conference of Mayors
vRide, Inc.
WageWorks, Inc.

Transit Authorities

Bay Area Rapid Transit District
Caltrain
King County Metro Transit
Metropolitan Transportation Commission (San Francisco)
Michigan Department of Transportation
Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Houston, Texas
New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
San Mateo County Transportation Authority
San Mateo County Transit District
Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority (SEPTA)
Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority
Triangle Transit
Utah Transit Authority
Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority

Regional, State and Local Organizations

A Better City
Airport Corridor Transportation Association (Pittsburgh)
California Transit Association
Correctional Management and Communications Group
Cycles for Change

Cushman Transportation Consulting, LLC
Fort Meade Regional Growth Management Committee
Greater Valley Forge Transportation Management Association (GVF)
Indiana Transportation Association
The Junction Transportation Management Association
METRO STAR Vanpool
Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board
Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County, Nevada
RideFinders
TransitIONS Commute Solution, LLC
Transit Solutions
TranSystems (Maitland, FL)
Trans Vironmental Solutions
Vital Communities and the Upper Valley Transportation Management Association

CC: The Honorable Harry Reid, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable John Boehner, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader
The Honorable Max Baucus, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Orrin Hatch, Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable David Camp, Chairman, House Ways & Means Committee
The Honorable Sander Levin, Ranking Member, House Ways & Means Committee