

# LEGISLATIVE ISSUE BRIEF

March 2017

## 2017 PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY TALKING POINTS

The coming year will likely present both challenges and opportunities for the public transportation industry. There is a great deal of uncertainty in this new and, at times, confusing environment. As an industry we must actively engage with our elected officials and the American public. When advocating on behalf of the industry, we must play offense and defense, work with the new administration and new Congress, and bring all of our resources to bear to protect and strengthen federal public transportation programs.

President Trump has repeatedly committed to advancing a major \$1 trillion infrastructure initiative that could include transit. While Congress passed the FAST Act in December of 2015 – which authorized spending for federal transit, passenger rail, and highway programs, through FY 2020 – it did not fully address the need to restore the nation’s aging public transit and highway systems to a state of good repair, the need for added capacity, or the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund beyond 2020. The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates there is a \$90 billion backlog of investments necessary just to bring our systems into a state of good repair.

There have also been rumors that the incoming administration might revive old, unsuccessful efforts to eliminate the federal transit program as part of an FY 2018 budget proposal or reduce discretionary grant programs such as Capital Investment Grants. Further details are expected any day with the release of a so-called “skinny budget” outline, prior to the release of the full budget proposal in May. This rumor would be inconsistent with both the President’s stated desire to improve our infrastructure and the commitment of Congress to federal public transportation programs enshrined in the FAST Act. And while Congress ultimately holds the purse strings, the industry must be prepared to respond threats to its federal funding.

### AS YOU MEET WITH YOUR CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION PLEASE HIGHLIGHT:

- **The American public - as well as Democratic and Republican members of Congress - support greater investment in public transportation.**
- **Investments in public transportation grow the economy nationwide and create short- and long-term American jobs in fields like construction and manufacturing.**
- **There is a strong return on investment for public transportation: for every \$1 invested in public transportation, approximately \$4 is generated in economic returns. It increases real estate values, brings customers to businesses, and connects communities and individuals to opportunity.**
- **Local citizens are voting to tax themselves to invest in their public transportation systems. Similar investments on the federal level are essential to these efforts and to maintaining global economic competitiveness.**
- **There is no reason to wait: Congress and President Trump should work together to maintain existing public transportation programs and pass legislation that invests additional resources in our public transportation infrastructure.**