

June 16, 2020

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio:

Access Services writes in support of the *Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation in America (INVEST in America) Act* (H.R. 2). The \$494 billion legislation, and its \$105 billion investment in public transit and mobility innovation initiatives, would address the immediate needs of paratransit amid the COVID-19 pandemic, while providing a long-term strategy to carry our transit industry into the future. We urge swift passage of the *INVEST in America Act* in the U.S. House of Representatives to ensure the stability of the transportation system of the United States.

Access Services oversees the provision of paratransit services to individuals with disabilities on behalf of Los Angeles County's 45 public fixed route operators. We provide more than 3.1 million trips per year to more than 144,000 qualified disabled riders in a service area of over 1,950 square miles. In addition, as the state-mandated Consolidated Transportation Services Agency (CTSA), Access Services is charged with the development and implementation of regional coordination of social service transportation to seniors, persons with disabilities, the young, and the low-income disadvantaged.

Our agency appreciates that the *INVEST in America Act* would provide robust federal funding for transit in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 in response to the economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The legislation would provide \$83.1 billion to states, cities, tribes, territories, and transit agencies in the next fiscal year. Proposed changes would enable transit agencies to cover salaries and operating expenses, helping to preserve local jobs. Our dedicated transit workers deserve that security, especially considering their contributions to the riders we serve throughout this pandemic.

As one of the largest paratransit agencies in the United States, we are interested in the one-stop paratransit program that would be authorized by the *INVEST in America Act* and, given our experience creating similar programs, would be happy to offer technical assistance to policymakers. This new grant program would allow paratransit agencies to make extra stops between pick-up and drop-off points and examine the costs and benefits of flexibility in paratransit trips that allow an extra stop for certain needs, whether it be dropping children off at daycare or school or stopping briefly at the pharmacy, grocery store, or bank.

Congress must pass a long-term reauthorization before the expiration of the *Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act of 2015* at the end of September. We appreciate your leadership offering the *INVEST in America Act*, and we encourage the House to pass it. This legislation will provide the transit

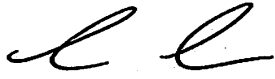


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Access Services is a public entity

industry with the funding, flexibility, and long-term certainty necessary during these terribly uncertain times. Thank you for your continued partnership at the federal level.

Sincerely,



Andre Colaiace
Executive Director
Access Services