



April 7, 2009

The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
United States House of Representatives
2334 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Nadler:

On behalf of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and its nearly 1,500 member organizations, I write to commend you for your interest in workforce development issues for the public transportation industry and to offer our views on this subject and the ideas you have advanced in H.R. 7053, the Transportation Job Corps Act of 2008. APTA has made workforce development a priority for the transit industry in the upcoming surface transportation legislation, and we welcome the opportunity to work with you and our friends in the labor unions on a comprehensive legislative package that will address the future needs of our workforce.

As you know, startling numbers of upcoming retirements, as well as significant changes in technology, are creating an urgent need to begin investing in human capital to prevent worker shortages and ensure safe travels for all transit riders. We thank you for your leadership in seeking to address these transit workforce issues and for the introduction of H.R. 7053 last year. Your thoughtful proposal would authorize \$200 million to create programs to retain and recruit workers, develop management skills and promote diversity, and establish ten regional Workforce Development Councils that would develop their own training initiatives based on research they have conducted to identify problematic labor issues. H.R. 7053 and the subsequent reauthorization proposal put forth by the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), are in many ways consistent with APTA's proposal and would be a great step in the right direction toward reaching our mutual goals.

As part of our recommendations for the upcoming surface transportation authorization bill, APTA has proposed an increased emphasis on workforce development and recommends the following:

- continue and expand all existing workforce development programs;
- make permissible the use of federal Urbanized Area §5307 Formula Funds and Rural Area §5311 Formula Funds to provide training and development programs at the discretion of the local transit agency; continue and expand the programs at the Transportation Learning Center (TLC) and the National Training Institute (NTI) at Rutgers University, and promote new partnerships between transportation agencies and universities and community colleges;
- provide \$15 million in new funding for industry-led, directed and managed studies to create and develop new training, partnerships and programs to address current and next generation workforce needs;

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- provide \$99 million over the six year authorization period to support the creation of labor/management regional training consortium partnerships that provide advanced public transportation specific skills training for operators and maintainers.

APTA believes that establishing a nationwide training network can be a powerful tool in providing wider access to training the industry's workforce. In promoting the issue of workforce development, we have found that there are many good training and development programs that exist in various parts of the country. However, there is limited coordination of these training and development efforts. To that end, we are concerned that as written in your proposal, the structure of the ten separate Workforce Development Councils will result in an inefficient duplication of research and curriculum development across the country and perpetuate the challenges we face in the area of workforce development. APTA favors a model that would concentrate limited resources for research and development at a few critical locations, such as the TLC and NTI mentioned above. Standard training tools developed at these centralized locations can then be distributed to regional centers, whose focus would be on providing the training to those who seek it. APTA believes this approach can make better use of limited federal dollars, and that positive results can be achieved within the funding levels we have recommended.

Again, I thank you for your dedication to this issue and for your continued strong support of public transportation. I look forward to working with you and your staff as we seek to address the critical workforce development needs of the transit industry. If you have any questions, please contact me or Paul Dean of APTA's Government Affairs Department at (202) 496-4887 or email pdean@apta.com.

Sincerely yours,



William W. Millar
President

WWM/tjj

cc: Warren George, Amalgamated Transit Union