



**Regional
Transportation
Authority**

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June 16, 2020

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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Leanne P. Redden
Executive Director

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves:

On behalf of the Regional Transportation Authority of Northeastern Illinois (RTA), I write to extend our thanks and gratitude to Chairman DeFazio, members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and committee staff for their work in introducing H.R. 2, the Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation (INVEST) in America Act. This comprehensive surface transportation reauthorization legislation promotes critical investments in public transit and outlines transportation infrastructure development priorities over the next 5 years, and the RTA strongly supports this legislation as the Committee prepares to markup H.R. 2 on Wednesday, June 17, 2020.

As you may be aware, the RTA provides financial oversight, funding, and transit planning for transit operators within the Northeastern Illinois region. These transit operators, or service boards, include the Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra, and Pace Suburban Bus and Pace Americans with Disabilities Act Paratransit (Pace). Together, these three transit operators serve more than two million riders on a typical weekday across 7,200 transit route miles and is committed to providing safe, reliable service for the greater Northeastern Illinois region.

The INVEST in America Act would authorize \$105 billion for public transportation funding through Fiscal Year 2025, providing critical funding towards recovery for transit operators following the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthening transit infrastructure to improve accessibility and connectivity through greater transit route coverage and reliability. In particular, the RTA supports increases in funding for the Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program as well as proposed changes to the program that would increase the federal cost-share cap for projects and expand the list of projects eligible for CIG funding. The establishment of an Office of Transit-Supportive Communities within the Federal Transit Administration and focus on transit-oriented development, along with greater flexibilities for the use of formula grant funding for mobility on demand projects, would help meet the mobility needs of growing communities and support our regional economy.

Additionally, H.R. 2 would authorize \$60 billion for passenger rail over the next 5 years, increasing rail infrastructure investments five-fold from the previous Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act funding levels. Along with funding for Amtrak to upgrade its in-state and national networks, the establishment of the new Passenger Rail Improvement, Modernization, and Expansion (PRIME) grant program would further relieve existing state of good repair backlogs while the reauthorizations of the existing Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant and Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Funding (RRIF) programs would further opportunities for commuter rail systems to improve safety, service, and overall reliability.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue and we look forward to working with you and your staff on this and other relevant legislation in the future that would help improve the RTA system and overall experience for the millions of riders that we serve every day. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "L. Redden".

Leanne P. Redden
Executive Director