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ASSOCIATION**

July 13, 2017

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The Honorable Susan M. Collins
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
Housing and Urban Development
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Collins and Ranking Member Reed:

On behalf of the more than 1,500 member organizations of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), I write to share our views as the Senate Appropriations Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee works to finalize the fiscal year (FY) 2018 spending bill. Federal public transportation programs provide economic and critical mobility benefits for Americans across the country.

APTA strongly urges the Subcommittee to fully fund all Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act programs, including \$9.733 billion for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs supported by the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund.

We support funding for Capital Investment Grants (CIG) – which include worthy and well vetted New Starts, Small Starts, and Core Capacity projects – at the highest possible level. These grants are the primary source of federal investment in construction and expansion of heavy rail, light rail, commuter rail, and bus rapid transit projects. While all CIG projects include a local funding component, the ability for systems to expand or grow in the face of increasing demand for quality service is dependent on the additional federal funds. Public transportation ridership has grown at a higher rate than both population and vehicle miles travelled since 2004. The ability to respond to this demand is essential to keep our communities moving efficiently.

APTA appreciates that the House version of the bill includes language reaffirming the importance of this program and directing the Secretary to continue administering the CIG program in accordance with the procedural and substantive requirements of current law. The 54 or so projects currently in the FTA ratings process will generate economic benefits, attract business development in project corridors, connect workers to jobs, create good new jobs, and relieve highway and

road congestion. These projects alone add up to \$38 billion in new investment, and account for 800,000 jobs and \$90 billion in economic output nationally. We hope the Senate will include similar CIG language of their own that will ensure the program continues functioning as intended.

Research and workforce development programs continue to be critical investments that pay huge dividends for public transportation operators and users. We ask that you appropriate no less than the FAST Act authorization of \$20 million to support Public Transportation Innovation research and development programs and \$5 million for Technical Assistance and Workforce Development programs.

Increased federal funding to support commuter, intercity, and high-speed passenger rail service continues to be a priority for the public transportation industry. Enhancing our national passenger rail network with connections to other modes of public transportation expands mobility options and is essential to economic growth. APTA urges the Subcommittee to fully fund all competitive Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) grant programs, including the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program, the Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair Program and the Restoration and Enhancement Grant Program, as well as the Amtrak programs at their authorized levels. APTA also opposes any legislative provisions that limit funding for the development of high-speed and intercity passenger service.

Lastly, APTA encourages the Subcommittee to fund the TIGER grant program and fully fund the commitment to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority made by the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008.

We are grateful for the opportunity to comment and for your efforts to advance an FY18 appropriations bill. We look forward to reading the bill and working with you as the annual appropriations process continues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard A. White".

Richard A. White
Acting President and CEO

Cc: The Members of the Senate Appropriations Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee