



June 9, 2020

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Richard Sampson

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2134 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio,

I write to you on behalf of the South West Transit Association (SWTA) and its public transit agency members located throughout Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas in strong support of the INVEST in America Act. We applaud your leadership as Chair of – and the support of your colleagues on – the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, along with the hard work and engagement of your collective staffs in crafting and introducing this hallmark legislation to set the future of federal investment in surface transportation across our nation.

As SWTA represents transit providers of all sizes – from large urban systems with extensive rail and BRT networks to small urban, rural and tribal systems – we appreciate the INVEST Act's substantial increases in investment across all current federal transit funding programs. At the same time, we are encouraged by the introduction of several new initiatives that respond to the new realities of on-demand mobility, incentivize added service frequency and address climate change.

Over the past several months, Committee staff have been open and engaged as our Association's members and staff have shared our big-picture legislative priorities and specific policy changes for reauthorization legislation. They listened to our needs for transformative levels of investment in federal transit formula programs and Capital Investment Grants, in concert with transit industry associations such as APTA, CTAA, The Bus Coalition and Transportation For America. And they incorporated our nuanced requests to increase the STIC program set-aside from 1 to 3 percent, continue funding growth for the Core Capacity program, add policy for allowable sale of vehicles past their useful life over \$5,000 and update charter bus regulations that allow transit providers increased flexibility in responding to transportation needs of local governments that provide local matching funds.

In reviewing the text of the bill, SWTA would like to offer a few suggestions that include one modification to the Bus & Bus Facilities program (Section 5339). These include:

- Add vehicles purchased using Section 5339 competitive grants along with capital projects under the Section 5307, 5310 and 5311 programs as allowable for use of proceeds from vehicle sale after the asset has past its useful life in Sec. 2913 of the bill;
- Exempt Section 5311 recipients awarded competitive grants through the Section 5339 program from Public Transportation Safety Plan requirements intended for Section 5307 recipients;
- Allow Section 5310 and 5311 recipients to provide meals, prescription and other essential delivery services during crisis and emergency situations like the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters.

We look forward to continued, productive communication with your staff in consideration of our requested changes. At the same time, SWTA encourages its members to share enthusiastic support with their Congressional delegations for the substantial growth in federal transit investment and industry-informed policy changes that the INVEST in America Act represents. This kind of transformative legislation affirms our longstanding vision in the SWTA Nation that effective, reliable and responsive transit exists and matters everywhere.

Sincerely,



Richard Sampson
Executive Director



June 11, 2020

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Executive Director
Richard Sampson

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1135 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member Graves,

I write to you on behalf of the South West Transit Association (SWTA) and its public transit agency members located throughout Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas in strong support of the INVEST in America Act. We are encouraged by the opportunity for the full Transportation & Infrastructure Committee to review this important legislation to set the future of federal investment in surface transportation across our nation.

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Richard Sampson
Executive Director