
April 5, 2010

The Honorable John Kerry
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lindsey Graham
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joseph Lieberman
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Kerry, Lieberman, and Graham:

Thank you for your leadership in crafting comprehensive, economy-wide energy independence and climate change legislation. We strongly support your efforts to include the transportation sector in this framework, which is responsible for 70 percent of U.S. oil usage and nearly 30 percent of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. However, we are concerned that without investments in clean transportation infrastructure and technology, the transportation sector will not meet its potential to contribute to our energy and climate goals.

We urge you to include robust investments in transportation in your forthcoming Senate clean energy legislation, provided those investments reduce oil use and GHG emissions, as well as cut transportation costs for consumers.

There are several mechanisms through which such investments could be made. However, because our federal transportation policy does not currently support oil savings or
greenhouse gas reduction, we have deep concerns about proposals to deposit funds from sales of carbon permits in the Highway Trust Fund without additional policies to direct those funds towards transportation projects that advance our climate and energy goals.

A recent analysis of the transportation sector by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency found that a combination of vehicle technology, fuel efficiency improvements, and travel efficiency could make a significant contribution to meeting energy and climate goals. Additionally, such measures have been shown to save transportation consumers money. The average American household today spends 20 percent of its income on transportation, which is second only to housing costs in overall household spending. For low-income families and those living in areas without access to public transportation, the costs are, on average, even higher.

Providing some level of direct consumer rebates within your bill may be one way to address transportation costs. However, it is even more important to invest in essential public infrastructure and technology that will create jobs now and save Americans money on transportation costs in the long term, including strategies such as expanded public transportation, vehicle electrification, and complete streets. A robust portion of the revenue generated by your legislation should be invested in such transportation technology and infrastructure.

Transportation for America is committed to passing a surface transportation bill this year that is aligned with the goals of energy and climate legislation. You can take the first step toward accomplishing this alignment in your legislation by including a framework under which states and regions consider how best to reduce oil use and GHG emissions in the transportation sector. We support the inclusion of Sections 112 and 113 of S. 1733 in your legislation to ensure that states and regions are doing their part to invest in cleaner transportation solutions that contribute to these goals.

Transportation for America is a diverse coalition of more than 400 organizations and officials throughout the country dedicated to bringing our transportation policy into the 21st century. We believe that energy legislation provides a unique and vital opportunity to ensure that we keep America moving and create jobs while reducing oil consumption and GHG emissions. We look forward to working with you to build a more sustainable, energy-efficient transportation future for the U.S.

Sincerely,

Alternatives for Community & Environment, Inc.
America 2050
America Bikes
American High Speed Rail Association
American Public Health Association
Amtrak
Apollo Alliance
Carrots & Sticks
Climate Communities
Climate Solutions
Complete Streets Coalition
Congress for the New Urbanism
Conservation Law Foundation
Environment America
Environmental and Energy Study Institute
Global Green USA
High Speed Rail U.S.
Institute for Transportation and Development Policy
International Downtown Association
League of American Bicyclists
League of Conservation Voters
Locus, Responsible Real Estate Developers and Investors
National Association of City Transportation Officials
National Association of Railroad Passengers
National Center for Bicycling & Walking
National Housing Conference
Natural Resources Defense Council
NCB Capital Impact
Partnership for Prevention
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Project for Public Spaces
Reconnecting America
Safe Routes to School National Partnership
Sierra Club
STPP
Transport Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO
Transportation for America
Transportation Equity Network
Trust for America's Health
U.S. PIRG
Walk Score