

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

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,

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