

June 19, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
437 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker of the House
1233 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
2365 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Enzi
Chairman, Committee on the Budget
379A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
233 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Womack
Chairman, Committee on the Budget
2412 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
304 Russell Senate Office Building
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The Honorable Bernie Sanders
Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget
332 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations
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Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Yarmuth
Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget
131 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Cc: Members of the Senate
Cc: Members of the House

Dear Honorable Members:

Since the early years of the American republic, transportation investments have been highly correlated with expanding economic opportunities. We have known since we built the Erie Canal, inaugurated the first transcontinental railroad service, opened the first subway in Boston, or established Route 66 that transportation investments play a catalytic role in transforming our economy, geography, and social fabric.

These transformative investments delivered real opportunities to the American people—they drove economic growth, expanded access to jobs, enabled a more equitable society, improved our health, safety, and environment all while building stronger, more vibrant communities. If we understood the power of transportation investments 200 years ago, certainly we should be able to recognize their efficacy today. Yet that reality is still often overlooked or misunderstood.

We, the undersigned, write to urge you to recognize the power transportation investments can and continue to have on making our communities dynamic, livable, and connected places while strengthening our country's position in the global marketplace.

We want all American communities, large and small, across the country to benefit from a multimodal transportation network. We want to rebuild and improve our transportation infrastructure and that begins by ensuring that projects and programs in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act are fully funded and that the administration's proposed cuts to key federal transportation programs—including the BUILD (previously TIGER) program, the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Capital Investment Grants (CIG), and long-distance passenger rail programs—are defeated and funding for these programs are secured or enhanced.

As you consider funding levels for fiscal year (FY) 2019, we urge you to prioritize federal investments in our national transportation system, specifically for public transportation and passenger rail service. We request funding for the following:

- FTA's CIG program at or above the FY18 level of \$2.645 billion with continued support for 56 projects in 41 communities that are anticipating funding by requiring the USDOT to sign Full Funding Grant Agreements (FFGA's), advance projects through the pipeline, and obligate these dollars so construction can begin;
- Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grants program at or above the FY18 level of \$1.5 billion;
- Amtrak's national network at or above the FY18 level \$1.292 billion and \$650 million for the Northeast Corridor;
- Consolidated Rail Infrastructure Safety and Improvement (CRISI) grants at or above the FY18 level of \$592 million; and
- Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) grants at or above the FY18 level of \$20 million.

We further request that you protect the Highway Trust Fund and Mass Transit Account in the FY19 budget process.

Capital investments for transit also support high-wage manufacturing jobs producing components for trains and buses. The supply chain for public transportation is as deep as it is wide, touching every corner of the country and employing thousands of Americans who produce everything from tracks, to seats, windows, communications equipment, wheels, and everything else in between. For example, recent capital improvements made in just four transit systems—San Francisco, Denver, Chicago, and Portland—supported jobs in 21 states.

There is a strong return on investment for public transportation. Every \$1 billion spent annually on public transportation supports an average of 21,800 jobs. And for every \$1 invested in public transportation, approximately \$4 are generated in economic returns, exceeding the returns generated by transportation investments in roads alone. In addition, passenger trains are economic engines for the towns they serve: for every \$1 invested in passenger trains, communities see a \$3 return in additional economic activity. Amtrak leverages the \$1.5 billion in federal grants it receives to a total spending impact of \$8.3 billion per year, supporting 103,000 jobs.

In FY18, Congress exceeded the funding commitments established by the FAST Act. We urge you to sustain this investment in programs that are critical to rebuilding our infrastructure and supporting local economic development.

Local communities rely on the federal government to be a reliable partner in building and maintaining their transportation investments. Eliminating and dramatically reducing programs as suggested in the administration's FY19 budget would undermine the investments of time and money made by local communities. Implementing these budget cuts would slash investment in transportation and represent a failure to the American public.

These cuts would have a devastating impact on communities by eliminating manufacturing jobs, reducing benefits to the economy, paring down transportation services, and turning away local and private dollars that would have gone to transportation investments if projects were assured a federal partner.

For these reasons, we urge you to continue to provide robust funding for federal transportation programs in the FY19 appropriations process and to protect the Highway Trust Fund and the Mass Transit Account in the FY19 budget process.

Thank you again for your commitment to improving America's infrastructure.

Sincerely,

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Town of Perdido Beach

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Living Streets Alliance

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