

February 14, 2011

Dear [U.S. House Member],

The transportation cuts contained in the “Spending Reduction Act of 2011” as proposed by the Republican Study Committee (RSC) will derail the investments that are critical for creating jobs and developing a 21st Century transportation infrastructure. The proposed cuts will undermine potential job creation and will have harmful effects on regional and national economic recovery. We urge you to vote against any cuts to critical transportation programs during the upcoming FY11 budget vote in the House.

New Starts, Amtrak, and High-Speed Passenger Rail, as well as Sustainable Communities Funding, are programs that will benefit the nation for decades to come. Every \$1 dollar invested in public transportation yields \$4 in economic returns. Furthermore, the analysis indicates that, per billion dollars of annual spending, investment in public transportation capital combined with operations within the US, supports in one year an average of 36,000 jobs. Additionally, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has cited public transit and other transportation investments as critical to rebuilding our economic foundation. Attached are detailed talking points on each of these programs.

Cuts to transportation funding in the FY11 budget will have devastating consequences for communities across the country. For example, transit agencies have already begun projects in the current federal fiscal year that rely on continued support at authorized levels. Cutting that funding will kill jobs, waste money already invested and undermine the transit infrastructure that Americans rely on to get to work.

There is a difference between investing and wasteful spending. Failing to build now what we need for future economic prosperity only robs us of the revenues we will need to reduce the deficit, invigorate our economic base, and create good-paying jobs in the United States. It would be fatal to the nation’s economic health to focus only on short-term costs without looking at the economic value that these essential long-term transportation investments provide. Your support is critical to ensuring continued funding of our transportation system and our groups urge you to protect this funding in the FY11 budget.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Biking & Walking
America Walks
American Public Transportation Association
American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

Amtrak
Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals (APBP)
Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL)
Avvantt Partners LLC
Center for Rural Strategies
CEOs for Cities
Citizens Beautification Coalition
Community Streetcar Coalition
Congress for the New Urbanism
Conservation Law Foundation
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Law and Policy Center
Fehr & Peers
Green Millennium
High Speed Rail U.S.
International Downtown Association
League of Rural Voters National Complete Streets Coalition
National Congress of American Indians
National Housing Conference
National Trust for Historic Preservation
New Starts Working Group
Partnership for Prevention
PolicyLink
Reconnecting America
RAIL Solution
Safe Routes to School National
Partnership
Safe States Alliance
Smart Growth America
Teamsters Rail Conference
Transportation Equity Network
Transportation for America
Trust for America's Health
TWU International, AFL-CIO
Upstream Public Health
Wider Opportunities for Women
YouthBuild USA

Arizona

Arizona Public Interest Research Group (Arizona PIRG)

California

Breathe California of Sacramento-Emigrant
Trails
California WALKS

Californians For High Speed Rail
Coast Starlight Communities Network
Los Angeles Walks
Move San Diego
TransForm
Ubuntu Green
Walk San Francisco
WALKSacramento

Connecticut

Greater Bridgeport Transit

Florida

1000 Friends of Florida
BikeWalkLee
Florida Public Transportation Association

Georgia

Georgia Public Interest Research Group
Center for Neighborhood Technology

Illinois

Illinois PIRG
Metropolitan Planning Council
Regional Transportation Authority (Chicago region)

Indiana

Bloomington Transportation Options for
People

Kansas

Let's Go KC Alliance for Transportation Choice

Maryland

Action Committee for Transit
Purple Line NOW

Massachusetts

Alternatives for Community & Environment
Environmental League of Massachusetts
LivableStreets Alliance
MA Smart Growth Alliance
Massachusetts Association of CDCs
Massachusetts Bicycle Coalition
WalkBoston

Michigan

Disability Advocates of Kent County
Michigan Municipal League
PIRGIM
Transportation Riders United
Disability Advocates of Kent County

Minnesota

1000 Friends of Minnesota
Alliance for Metropolitan Stability
City of Independence, MN
Growth & Justice
Minnesota Center for Environmental
Advocacy
St. Paul Smart Trips
Transit for Livable Communities

Mississippi

Quitman County Development Organization

Missouri

Missouri Bicycle & Pedestrian Federation
Let's Go KC Alliance for Transportation Choice (Missouri and Kansas)

Montana

Active Transportation Alternatives
Area IV Agency on Aging
ASUM Transportation
BikeNet
Bozeman Area Bicycle Advisory Board
Current Transportation Solutions
Gallatin Growth Solutions
Headwaters Trail System
High Plains Architects
Journeys From Home Montana
Mainstreet Uptown Butte
Missoula advocates for sustainable transportation
Missoula Metropolitan Planning
Organization
Missoula Parks and Recreation
Montana Conservation Voters, Montana
Conservation Voters Education Fund
Montana Council on Developmental
Disabilities
Montana Public Interest Research Group (MontPIRG)
RiverStone Health

New Jersey

Keep America Moving

New Mexico

New Mexico Chapter of the American
Planning Association
Sierra Club- Rio Grande Chapter

New York

Family Community Life Center, Inc.
New York Bicycling Coalition
Transport Workers Union Local 100
Transportation Alternatives
Tri-State Transportation Campaign
UrbanAdvisors Ltd (New York, Oregon, DC)
Vision Long Island

Oregon

Commute Options for Central Oregon
Eugene SRTS
Geonomics Consulting
Lane Transit District
Metro
OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon
Oregon Environmental Council
OSPIRG
Ride Connection
TriMet
Westside Transportation Alliance

Washington

Cascadia Congress for the New Urbanism
Geonomics Consulting

West Virginia

Good News Mountaineer Garage

Wisconsin

WISPIRG

ADDENDUM

This addendum contains an explanation of projects and programs that have been targeted for proposed cuts by the Republican Study Committee and which would also be vulnerable in any funding rescission scenario proposed in a Continuing Resolution. Following the discussion of projects and programs is a short discussion of the Debt Commission's recent recommendations for transportation funding and a brief comparison of the Debt Commission's and the Republican Study Committee's proposals.

The New Starts program:

- The New Starts program primarily funds construction of new rail lines or extensions to existing lines. As a construction-focused program, New Starts supports thousands of jobs both along the rail line and along the supply chain, including manufacturing. Eliminating these construction projects would also eliminate these jobs.
- The New Starts program leverages more state and local funds for every federal dollar invested than most other transportation programs. In fact, state and local governments provide more than half of the funding for New Starts projects. In contrast, the federal government requires states to fund only 20% of the cost of a new highway project.
- The New Starts program has a proven record of attracting private-sector investments along the new transit line, leveraging the federal investment many times over to create economic returns for both private and public sector participants.
- The New Starts program is oversubscribed and has been for many years. The federal government is not requiring communities to build transit; instead, the genesis of demand is at the local level because of recognition of the many benefits these projects return with regard to economic and oil security goals.
- Transit investment reduces the amount of time that Americans spend stuck in traffic and the amount of fuel that is wasted due to congestion, putting money back into the pockets of taxpayers.

High Speed Rail (HSR):

- A number of high-speed rail lines are within months of construction and a significant amount of federal, state, and local investments has already been made. These projects, therefore, should be completed.
- High-speed rail is the most efficient way to relieve congestion on the country's interstate thoroughfares near congested city centers.
- High-speed rail investments will help keep air travel safe by relieving overcrowding and reducing the wear and tear on the nation's overburdened air traffic control system.

- Consistent federal funding will develop a domestic manufacturing industry that will export American technology to the rest of the world.
- High-speed rail will buttress weak real estate markets in small and medium-sized towns near the nation's large cities.

Sustainable Communities:

- A core mission of the Partnership for Sustainable Communities is to break down silos between federal programs to ensure that limited federal resources are used efficiently. Eliminating this initiative would end this effort to stretch federal dollar further and would result in reversion to old, siloed, inefficient ways of doing business.
- The Partnership invests in locally-developed community activities based on performance and outcomes, creating accountability for results.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority:

- WMATA has identified over \$11 billion in capital needs over the next decade. Without the funding authorized by the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA), many of these needs will go unmet, leading to further deterioration of the system's condition and safety, and further erosion in the public's confidence in the system.
- The PRIIA funding is being used to improve the system's safety, including the purchase of rail cars to replace the 1970's era cars that are currently in use, which is in line with a key recommendation of the National Transportation Safety Board.
- Forty percent of peak-hour riders on Metrorail are federal employees. A 2004 Blue Ribbon Panel found that the federal government is the biggest beneficiary of the Metro system. However, unlike other employers in the region, the federal government does not pay property taxes to the local jurisdictions which run the system.
- Each dollar authorized under PRIIA will be equally matched by a state/local contribution, leveraging more state/local money than most transportation programs do.

Amtrak:

- Cuts to Amtrak will have a direct impact on the ability of states to offer commuter rail service.
- Small towns all over America will lose a critical lifeline to the rest of the country that currently helps to sustain jobs and the families which depend upon them.

Recommendations of the Debt Commission

The Debt Commission recently recommended that the Transportation Trust Fund be fully funded by increasing gas tax and that spending be matched to the revenues collected each year. Moreover, the Commission's proposals removed the funding of

the Trust Fund outside the purview of the annual appropriations process. The Commission called for “significant reforms to control federal highway spending” and stated that “Congress should limit trust fund spending to the most pressing infrastructure needs rather than forcing states to fund low-priority projects. It should also end the practice of highway authorization earmarks such as the infamous Bridge to Nowhere.”

Comparison of the Debt Commission and the Republican Study Committee Proposals:

It is useful to briefly note the key differences between the Debt Commission’s and the Republican Study Committee’s proposals:

- The Debt Commission recognizes the importance of infrastructure investment as offering long-term certainty through a dedicated funding source and mandatory spending (outside the annual appropriations process). The Republican Study Committee, on the other hand, does not focus on infrastructure investment, but, rather, emphasizes the short-term need for cutting expenditures and funding.
- The Debt Commission recommends reforms to the highway program, not just transit and rail. The Republican Study Committee does not focus on the need for substantive reform.
- The Commission recommends a focus on the most pressing infrastructure needs, regardless of mode, while the Republican Study Committee proposal eliminates entire modal programs wholesale.