

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 26, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

As the leaders of the Senate Committees with responsibility for authorizing the Federal surface transportation programs, we are requesting a meeting with Peter Orszag, Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Ray LaHood, Secretary of the Department of Transportation (DOT), and White House senior officials to discuss the status of the highway trust fund and the next highway, transit and highway safety authorization.

We recently learned that the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) is estimated to encounter a shortfall by August of this year and that an additional \$5 to 7 billion will be needed to keep the Federal-aid Highway Program running through the end of fiscal year 2009. In addition, administration officials have estimated that an additional \$8 to \$10 billion will be needed to maintain the program at current funding levels through the end of fiscal year 2010. This shortfall in funding is of great concern to us, and we would like to work with you to find a solution. The jobs created through transportation funding are critical to our economic recovery and our long-term prosperity.

In addition to addressing the short-term funding crisis, we also need to find a long-term, sustainable funding source for the next highway, transit and highway safety authorization. The current authorization, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), expires at the end of fiscal year 2009. Without an infusion of new funding into the HTF, existing formula programs and spending would be cut dramatically. A lack of consistent and dependable Federal funding would also make it difficult for transportation officials to address not only the nation's current infrastructure crisis, but also to improve the surface transportation network to accommodate the expected population increases and growth in freight traffic. A dedicated source of funding for such programs is the most reliable way to achieve these goals. The assurance states need cannot be achieved through the annual appropriations process.

The next authorization provides a crucial opportunity to both address funding issues and advance the innovative policy changes necessary to ensure our nation has the world-class road, rail and transit systems it needs to compete in the 21st century.

We look forward to meeting with senior administration officials at the earliest possible opportunity. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

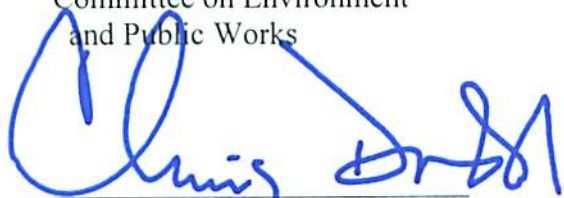
Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
Chairman
Committee on Environment
and Public Works



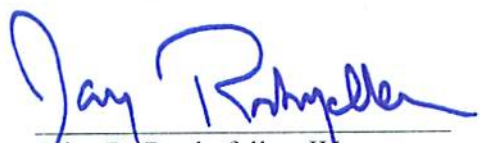
James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment
and Public Works



Christopher J. Dodd
Chairman
Committee on Banking,
Housing, and Urban Affairs



Richard C. Shelby
Ranking Member
Committee on Banking,
Housing, and Urban Affairs



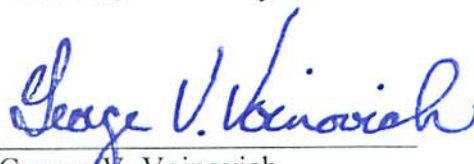
John D. Rockefeller, IV
Chairman
Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation



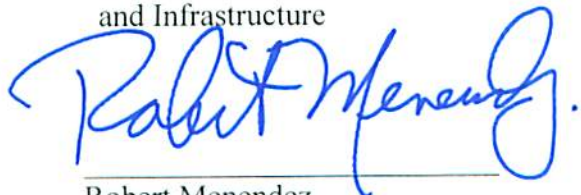
Kay Bailey Hutchison
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation



Max Baucus
Chairman
Committee on Finance, and
Subcommittee on Transportation
and Infrastructure



George V. Voinovich
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation
and Infrastructure



Robert Menendez
Chairman
Subcommittee on Housing,
Transportation, and Community
Development



David Vitter
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Frank R. Lautenberg
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Subcommittee on Surface
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John Thune
Ranking Member
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and Security