



October 21, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairman
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Vitter
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nick Rahall
Ranking Member
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515



Dear Chairmen Boxer and Shuster, and Ranking Members Vitter and Rahall:

On behalf of the local government community and its elected and specialized transportation officials, we are writing to thank you for your efforts to stave off any disruption in the flow of critical transportation funding for federally-assisted bridge, highway, transit, and other transportation projects. With a MAP-21 extension in place, we are also writing to ask you to support an adequately-funded, multi-year surface transportation reauthorization that addresses our nation's transportation infrastructure needs by directing a greater share of available funds to local governments and their regional agencies.



Specifically, our organizations are united in requesting that the next authorization bill increase the amount of Surface Transportation Program and other program funding that is suballocated to local areas. Cities, counties and townships collectively own 78 percent of the nation's road miles, 43 percent of the nation's federal-aid highway miles, and 50 percent of the nation's bridge inventory, and operate a majority of the nation's ports, airports and transit systems. Additionally, local governments maintain nearly all public parking structures, sidewalks and other ancillary transportation facilities, other related infrastructure, and oversee all land use and development practices. It is our firm belief that local elected officials, who are responsible for the vast majority of the system, are best situated to direct available transportation resources to projects serving their communities and regions.



Despite owning a majority share of our country's transportation network and being the level of government closest to the people, local governments and their metropolitan and regional planning organizations are suballocated a very limited share of federal highway funding – less than 15 percent of the total highway program. MAP-21 further strained local governments by decreasing – by 30 percent – the amount of highway funding available for the transportation infrastructure they own.



In this next reauthorization, we urge you to reaffirm your commitment to the nation's transportation system by increasing funding to its majority owners using the planning, decision-making and allocation processes modeled after those of the Surface Transportation Program. It is our belief that supporting locally owned infrastructure and emphasizing locally and regionally based decision-making will secure the most cost-effective, and economy- and mobility-enhancing investments to build our future.

We certainly recognize the difficult challenges before you in enacting an adequately funded, multi-year surface transportation reauthorization law that addresses our nation's transportation needs. By allocating more resources to metropolitan and other regional agencies and further empowering local elected officials as we have recommended, we believe you will move much closer to achieving this outcome. As representatives of the local government community, our organizations and our members are committed to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to move this critical legislation and America forward.

Sincerely,



DeLania Hardy
Executive Director
Association of Metropolitan
Planning Organizations



Matthew Chase
Executive Director
National Association
of Counties



Joanna Turner
Executive Director
National Association
of Regional Councils



Clarence E. Anthony
Executive Director
National League
of Cities



Tom Cochran
CEO & Executive Director
The United States
Conference of Mayors