



November 9, 2011

Dear Senator:

The mark-up of MAP-21 this week provides the opportunity to move forward with a bipartisan reauthorization of federal transportation policy. What should not be lost in this important effort is the necessity of providing balanced transportation choices for Americans—including safe and convenient walking and bicycling routes—and increasing the quality of our transportation system by preserving and improving environmental, historical and recreational assets. Transportation Enhancements, Safe Routes to School and the Recreational Trails Program are sorely needed and wildly popular in communities across the country. While we are pleased that these programs are included in the bill, we are disappointed that the draft reduces funding and adds expensive new eligibilities that do not conform to the purposes that these now consolidated programs were designed to achieve.

Dedicated funding for these programs in the reauthorization bill with increases on par with other parts of the bill would help to meet the growing demand for safe, affordable and healthy transportation and the high quality of life that Americans want and deserve. A tiny sliver of transportation funds—less than 2 percent—has created jobs and economic development, saved lives (47,000 Americans died while walking or bicycling in the last decade), and spurred a renaissance of active transportation and healthy recreation. While we are aware of the debate and controversy that currently surrounds these programs in the U.S. Senate, we assure you that the support for these activities back home is deep, broad and bipartisan. The bang for each taxpayer dollar is singular among transportation programs when you consider all the policy objectives facing state and community leaders that these programs help to address.

Consequently, we encourage you to support amendments and otherwise work towards improvements to MAP-21 that address the following shortcomings of the bill as released on Friday, November 4<sup>th</sup>:

- (1) The principle of dedicated funding is undermined by new eligible uses of funds that are expensive and out of step with program purposes. Road-oriented investments, environmental regulatory compliance and routine maintenance of vegetation are among the new uses that promise to overwhelm the core programs at stake without providing the improvements to the transportation system that the programs were created to provide.
- (2) Even if there were not expensive new eligibilities, funding for the consolidated programs is set according to the current level of investment in just Transportation Enhancements. In a bill that increases overall transportation funding, it is unwise to substantially reduce investment in areas that deliver superior value per dollar.



- (3) A provision enabling states to redirect unobligated funds if they remain unspent for a period appears to create a perverse incentive not to invest if greater flexibility is desired.

We applaud amendments that have been drafted to address some of these issues, including ones from committee leaders narrowing the road-oriented uses of the funds, Senator Cardin seeking to draw resources from all three existing core programs and to create opportunities for communities to compete for funds, and Senator Merkley seeking a dedicated level of funding for walking and bicycling investment.

Building on these efforts, we look forward to continuing to work with committee leadership, other senators on the committee and our constituents to address our concerns and achieve a balanced reauthorization bill.

Sincerely,

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy  
American Public Health Association  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
American Heart Association  
The Trust for Public Land  
National Recreation and Park Association  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
America Bikes  
Civil War Trust  
Safe Routes to School National Partnership  
National Center for Bicycling & Walking  
League of American Bicyclists  
International Mountain Bicycling Association  
Outdoor Alliance  
Adventure Cycling Association  
Institute for Transportation & Development Policy  
Southern Environmental Law Center