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Hundreds of Transportation, Business, Health, Environmental, Recreation and Community Leaders Speak Out for Federal Investment in Trails, Walking and Biking

Support Stands in Stark Contrast to Misdirected Congressional Attacks

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Counter to recent, short-sighted efforts to eliminate funding for trails and other safe routes to walk and bicycle, 302 organizations from all 50 states and the District of Columbia representing millions of Americans signed a letter urging the 114th Congress to support the wildly popular Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

Signers include national business leaders, planners and major health, environmental, and recreational organizations, including the bicycle industry, American Planning Association, American Public Health Association, Sierra Club and Transportation for America. Local supporters include government officials and chambers of commerce. These groups have joined together to urge Congress to support funding of TAP and other federal programs that ensure that Americans are able to safely walk and bike.

“There is overwhelming support for federal trails, walking and bicycling investment because everyone wants low-cost transportation solutions, economic vitality and healthy communities.” said Kevin Mills, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy’s (RTC) Senior Vice President of Policy. “Misdirected challenges to the Transportation Alternatives Program—like the bill introduced last week by Rep. Johnson (TX)—are ideological attacks out of step with the wishes of Americans.”
According to a recent bipartisan national survey performed by Lake Research Partners and Bellwether Research, Americans who are likely to vote in the 2016 elections favor increasing or maintaining federal funding for walking and biking paths by a 4-to-1 margin, with overwhelming support regardless of party affiliation. In fact, opposing federal funding alienates voters across the political spectrum—more than twice as many said they would be less likely, rather than more likely, to vote for a candidate who opposes federal funding for walking and biking paths.

Safe places to walk and bicycle are a key part of our nation’s transportation future. Investment in these assets provides hundreds of billions of dollars in benefits to Americans in the form of transportation, health and environmental savings.

The current level of federal investment in walking and biking infrastructure and recreational trails comprises only 1.5% of federal surface transportation spending. In addition, the Recreational Trails Program (part of TAP) is more than paid for by users of trails themselves.

For more information:

TrailBlog: Congress Extends Transportation Legislation Again; Attacks on Walking and Biking on the Rise
Poll Results: American Voters Support Trail Funding

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, a nonprofit organization with more than 100,000 members, is the nation's largest trails organization dedicated to connecting people and communities by creating a nationwide network of public trails, many from former rail lines and connecting corridors. Founded in 1986, Rails-to-Trails Conservancy’s national office is located in Washington, D.C., with regional offices in California, Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania. For more information visit www.railstotrails.org.