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**CONTACT:** Patricia Brooks, [patricia@matchmapmedia.com](mailto:patricia@matchmapmedia.com), 202.351.1757

## **Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Statement on House Democrats' Infrastructure Proposal: Transformative Change Is What America Needs**

**WASHINGTON**—Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) releases the following statement in response to the “Moving Forward Framework,” the House Democrats’ \$760 billion infrastructure proposal released today:

“For the first time in decades, Congressional leadership has proven that they’re willing to take a step back and evaluate how we prioritize and fund transportation in our country. The principles Rep. Nancy Pelosi (Calif.-12), Rep. Peter DeFazio (Ore.-4) and others released today provide a transformative framework to guide the upcoming debate about our country’s surface transportation spending—prioritizing transportation solutions that protect our climate, providing transportation choice so that people have affordable and accessible options to get where they need to go, and emphasizing the need to keep everyone safe, including those who bike and walk, as they move from place to place,” said Kevin Mills, RTC’s vice president of policy.

“These transportation priorities reflect 21st-century needs, and we are enthusiastic about how the ‘Moving Forward Framework’ will shape the future of transportation spending. We also know how important it is to enable more people to safely and conveniently walk and bike in order to meet the ambitious, important goals that this framework outlines. Creating active transportation systems—connected trails, sidewalks, bikeways and other infrastructure—will make it practical and safe for people to walk and bike where they need to go. We already have more than 36,000 miles of multiuse trails across the country that could be leveraged to make these strategic connections,” said Mills.

“This framework will require innovative policy solutions in order to achieve the goals that House Democrats have outlined. Targeting federal investment on priority connections is the affordable and quick way to make America’s active transportation system convenient for everyday travel—exactly the kind of policy innovation that will deliver the outcomes Reps. Pelosi and DeFazio are pushing America to achieve.”

On Jan. 28, RTC celebrated the introduction of the “Connecting America’s Active Transportation System Act” by Reps. Daniel Lipinski (Ill.-3), Jared Huffman (Calif.-2) and Chris Pappas (N.H.-1), which would provide \$500 million annually in funding for a federal competitive grant program to help communities and regions build connected active-transportation routes—trails, sidewalks, bikeways and other infrastructure—to ensure people can get where they want to go safely by foot, bike or wheelchair. This proposal, if included in the next federal transportation bill alongside increased funding for Transportation Alternatives and the Recreational Trails Program, would provide the necessary resources and policy changes to deliver a 21st-century transportation system to the nation and meet the goals outlined by House Democrats today.

Currently, funding for walking and bicycling facilities comprises less than 2% of the federal surface transportation budget, with limited policy direction to strategically prioritize those funds to fill critical infrastructure gaps and make the active transportation system more effective and efficient. More than 60 national and state organizations representing interests as far-ranging as biking and walking, health, transportation reform, environment, disability rights, planning and our nation’s local elected officials are joining RTC in calling on Congress to take this opportunity to invest in connecting America’s trails, walking and bicycling infrastructure to create an active transportation system for the country.

Read the full text of the “Connecting America’s Active Transportation System Act” and learn more about RTC’s efforts to inspire a visionary transportation reauthorization bill at [railstotrails.org/trailstransform](https://railstotrails.org/trailstransform), and follow the commentary on social media using the hashtag #TrailsTransform.

*Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is the nation’s largest trails organization—with a grassroots community more than 1 million strong—dedicated to connecting people and communities by creating a nationwide network of public trails, many from former rail lines. Connect with RTC at [railstotrails.org](https://railstotrails.org) and @railstotrails on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.*