



## For Immediate Release

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## Over 1,000 Organizations Come Together With A Clear Message for Congress: Walking and Biking Infrastructure Is Essential

### *As Congress Develops Country's Next Surface Transportation Bill, Advocates Warn that Vital Programs That Make It Safe to Walk And Bike Are At Risk*

**Washington (Feb. 2, 2026)**—Today, the nation's leading advocacy organizations for trails, walking and bicycling—the American Hiking Society, American Trails, the League of American Bicyclists, PeopleForBikes, Rails to Trails Conservancy and the Safe Routes Partnership—sent a letter to leaders of the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee with a clear message on behalf of over 1,100 organizations and millions of Americans: Walking and biking infrastructure is essential to the vitality, safety and economic resilience of communities small and large nationwide.

### Background

Currently, committee chairmen Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) and Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.), and ranking members Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Rep. Rick Larsen (D-Wa.) are leading efforts to pass the country's next surface transportation bill before the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act expires on Sept. 30, 2026. Bill drafts are expected later this month and will define the future of vital federal programs, like Transportation Alternatives, that have long provided the majority of funding to create, connect and maintain the country's walking and biking infrastructure and make it safe for people to navigate their communities. These programs have supported the development of over 42,500 miles of multiuse trails nationwide, hundreds of developing trail networks that provide safe transportation and recreation in every single state, and countless projects to create safe walking and bicycling routes nationwide.

### What's at Stake

According to letter organizers, this situation carries significant urgency. There are strong indicators that the future of federal programs that invest in safe walking and biking infrastructure is at risk when it is most needed—20 people die walking in the U.S. every day and people biking and walking account for a significant proportion of the 40,000 people killed on our roadways each year. As the bill is being developed, some Congressional leaders have indicated that it will harken back to a traditional bill that predates Transportation Alternatives' introduction in 1991, only funding vehicle infrastructure with no investment in trails, bike paths or transit. At the same time, calls from special interest groups like the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials to consolidate and lessen the already limited spending power of these programs are cause for serious concern.

## Action Needed

In response to these threats, more than 1,100 nonprofit organizations, businesses, corporations and elected officials representing millions of constituents and a broad cross-section of American priorities—from manufacturing to agriculture, healthcare, economic development, tourism and retail—have come together to demonstrate the widespread need for Congress to protect these important programs. In a letter sent to Congress on Feb. 2, 2026, signatories that represent the widespread interests of Americans are calling for the next surface transportation bill to include a fortified Transportation Alternatives program, and maintain broad eligibility for trails, walking and bicycling across transportation programs, as well as existing provisions for safe walking and bicycling.

Read the letter and view the full list of signers at [www.KeepAmericaActive.org](http://www.KeepAmericaActive.org).

## Statements of Support

### **Heather Klein Olson, Executive Director, American Hiking Society**

"For 30 years, the Transportation Alternatives program has been a backbone of American infrastructure, delivering 42,500 miles of trails to 63 million hikers. Great trails do more than provide a view; they provide a way of life. These aren't just scenic routes—they are vital transportation arteries that connect our daily lives, from the morning commute to daily routines that keep families and communities connected. Congress must now double down on this proven success to keep our communities moving."

### **Mike Passo, Executive Director, American Trails**

"Trail infrastructure that serves walkers and riders of all kinds are not optional amenities—they are essential public investments that save lives, strengthen local economies, and connect people to opportunity. For decades, programs like Transportation Alternatives have helped communities in every state, plus D.C. and Puerto Rico, build and maintain safe, accessible trail networks and active transportation routes that people rely on every day. As Congress develops the next surface transportation bill, we urge lawmakers to protect and strengthen these proven programs. Rolling back investments in trails and active transportation would put lives at risk and undermine the vitality of communities large and small across the country. American Trails stands with more than a thousand organizations nationwide in calling on Congress to keep America active, safe and connected."

### **Bill Nesper, Executive Director, League of American Bicyclists**

"The League of American Bicyclists has been advocating for safe and connected bicycling infrastructure since 1880. This essential infrastructure is not a new phenomenon. It is foundational to so many communities across America and our polling shows that 76% of Americans believe their communities would be a better place to live if bicycling were safer and more comfortable. When Congress created the Transportation Alternatives program, it began delivering on this unmet demand for better bicycling. It is critical these investments continue, rather than stall progress communities have been making for decades. When we build bicycle-friendly communities, we make life better for every resident and Congress should support funding that improves lives, expands transportation options, and reduces the dangers faced by people walking and biking on our roads."

### **Chris Bell, Director of Federal Policy, PeopleForBikes**

"When we invest in biking and walking infrastructure, we are investing in saving lives, expanding mobility, improving public health, and growing local economies. Communities of all cities recognize that this is a smart investment. From big cities to small towns, community leaders support expanding options for safe places to bike and walk, and federal funding decisions in the surface transportation reauthorization should reflect that demand. For decades, federal programs such as the longstanding Transportation Alternatives program have been vital for communities to build more active transportation projects. The U.S. bicycle industry joins our partners in calling on Congress to support these critical federal programs that keep our nation active."

**Ryan Chao, President, Rails to Trails Conservancy**

"The demand for safe routes to walk, bike and be active has grown exponentially since the turn of the century, powered by the collective understanding that being able to travel through our communities without a vehicle is essential. In every state, across communities of all sizes and types, progress is being made to connect walking and biking infrastructure, making it safer and more convenient for people to get around. When we invest in connecting active transportation routes, we invest in robust regional economies and job growth, increased mobility, and new opportunities for businesses and residents. The active transportation economy delivers more than \$34 billion annually—a return on investment each year that dwarfs total funding provided over 34 years of the Transportation Alternatives program alone. The potential to quadruple these benefits by increasing connectivity is why so many sectors, from manufacturing to retail, are joining us in calling on Congress to support federal programs that states rely on to build active transportation infrastructure. They know it's a fundamental federal role and that the strength of the country depends on the safety, vitality and well-being of its communities."

**Safe Routes Partnership****Marisa Jones, Managing Director**

"Every day, Safe Routes Partnership sees how sidewalks, crossings and bike paths, especially around schools, improve life for children and families. Federal investments in walking and biking infrastructure are foundational to kids' health, safety and opportunity. We urge Congress to protect and strengthen these investments in the next transportation bill."

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