

November 10, 2015

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leaders McConnell, Pelosi and Reid:

As the House and Senate prepare to begin conference negotiations to reconcile the two chamber's surface transportation program reauthorization proposals, a foundational decision must be made regarding the conference report's duration and annual investment levels.

The goal of the conference committee should be to produce final legislation that confronts the nation's surface transportation challenges with policy reforms AND increased federal investment levels. To that end, a reauthorization bill of less than six years duration with significant highway and public transportation investment increases is far superior to a six-year bill with status quo funding levels.

While the reliability of future federal highway and public transportation funds is a critical benefit of a multi-year reauthorization bill, such predictability alone is not sufficient to drive needed surface transportation improvements. For example, the 1998 bill authorized the highway and transit programs for six years, but also provided an eight percent average annual increase in federal highway investment. Similarly, the 2005 bill authorized the programs for five years and increased highway investment by an average four percent per year.

The resources generated by the House-passed legislation would enable conferees to deliver the highway and public transportation investment levels necessary to support continued economic growth and improved quality of life for all Americans. As currently written, the proposed House investment levels would unfortunately fail to keep pace with the projected annual inflation increases. While the Senate investment levels exceed—and are preferable to—those in the House bill, they would barely surpass projected increases in construction materials costs. Holding highway and public transportation investment at or below purchasing power levels will not create job growth, reduce traffic congestion, or address the nation's backlog of needed surface transportation infrastructure improvements.

We urge you to ensure any surface transportation conference report seeks to maximize the benefits it would provide as opposed to the number of years it would last.

Sincerely,

American Trucking Associations
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
AFL-CIO
AAA
American Road & Transportation Builders Association
Associated General Contractors of America

U.S. Travel Association
American Public Transit Association
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Highway Users Alliance
International Union of Operating Engineers
Laborers International Union of North America
Building America's Future
American Association of Port Authorities
Transport Workers Union, AFL-CIO
American Council of Engineering Companies
Association of Equipment Manufacturers
American Traffic Safety Services Association
Energy Equipment and Infrastructure Alliance
National Utility Contractors Association
American Concrete Pavement Association
American Iron and Steel Institute
National Railroad Construction & Maintenance Association (NRCMA)
Association of Union Constructors (TAUC)
Asphalt Emulsion Manufacturers Association
Asphalt Recycling & Reclaiming Association
International Slurry Resurfacing Association
United Brotherhood of Carpenters
National Electrical Contractors Association
National Asphalt Pavement Association
Portland Cement Association
American Bus Association
National Ready Mixed Concrete Association (NRMCA)
Associated Equipment Distributors
American Moving & Storage Association
Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO
American Concrete Pipe Association
National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association
National Precast Concrete Association
American Rental Association

Cc: House and Senate Conferees