

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce is pleased your Committee will mark up H.R. 2, the “INVEST in America Act,” tomorrow, June 17. Reauthorization of America’s surface transportation programs is critical to our economic recovery and to address our urgent infrastructure needs, and we encourage you to pursue bipartisan solutions that can be enacted before the current authorization expires.

The statistics of the state of our transportation network are staggering. 19.4 percent of our major highways (199,147 miles) are in poor or mediocre condition and need repaving or more substantive repairs. 7.6 percent of the nation’s bridges (more than 47,000) are [structurally deficient](#). Public transit systems have a \$99 billion backlog of state of good repair.

Reauthorizing surface transportation programs prior to their September 30 expiration would provide the certainty of federal commitment needed to address these challenges. It would also allow state, local, and private partners to move forward with much needed planning and construction of modern, resilient infrastructure that will ensure economic benefits and improve the everyday lives of all Americans.

As the Committee marks up this legislation, we urge you to include the following provisions to facilitate swift enactment:

- Ensure connectivity for both rural and urban regions with a balance between maintenance and new construction;
- Modernize the federal permitting process to ensure better utilization of limited investments while protecting the environment, providing for meaningful public input;
- Promote the use of innovation, technology and public-private partnerships to address the resilience of surface transportation programs;

- Promote resilience and adaptation policies that reduce risks for companies and communities ahead of the next crises, including predisaster mitigation;
- Address greenhouse gas and other emission reductions in ways that ensure continued economic growth and recognize the critical role that building or modernizing new, resilient infrastructure plays in addressing the climate challenge;
- Support intermodal connections between modes and encourage new entrants such as ride share, innovative technologies including automated vehicles, and other new transportation options to allow enhanced connections;
- Oppose re-regulation in both trucking and rail industries that impose government mandates that run counter to free market solutions;
- Consider further program consolidation that ensures greater flexibility for state and local partners to implement national objectives.

With historic unemployment, tremendous unmet infrastructure needs, and less than four months before the expiration of surface transportation programs, the Chamber urges prompt action on legislation that enjoys bipartisan support as the most effective and certain way to address these critical issues.

Sincerely,



Neil L. Bradley

cc: Members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure