

May 19, 2015

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The Americans for Transportation Mobility (ATM) Coalition, a national coalition of business, labor, highway and transit interests and concerned citizens, supports the two month extension of federal highway, transit and safety programs as a necessary measure to prevent shutdown of critical transportation infrastructure projects across the nation. We are extraordinarily frustrated by the pattern of Congress approving short-term stop gap legislation that has emerged as an alternative to choosing long-term revenue sources that would be dedicated to the Highway Trust Fund in support of the federal share of road, bridge, public transportation, and safety projects.

Washington has been deliberating, discussing, and effectively ducking transportation revenue issues—on a bipartisan basis—for 10 years. When *The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users* (SAFETEA-LU) was signed into law in 2005 it was already a well-documented fact that the revenues projected to come into the Highway Trust Fund would be insufficient to maintain federal funding levels for highways, transit, and highway safety after 2009.

Nearly three years ago, on July 6, 2012, the President signed *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (MAP-21) into law. At that time it was clear that 27 months later substantial revenues would be needed to pass a long-term, fully-funded transportation bill.

The problem is not one of a lack of revenue options. SAFETEA-LU created two commissions to make recommendations for the future of revenue sources to support federal transportation funding. Both commissions concluded that a simple, straightforward, effective solution would be a modest increase in user fees coupled with indexing to inflation. The commissions' reports suggested other potential revenue sources; so have reports from a host of organizations.

The coalition appreciates the fact that multiple congresses repeatedly refused to cut federal transportation investment when the current revenue sources fell short of covering outlays. The ATM is grateful that the Senate Finance and House Ways and Means committees have found offsets from other revenue sources, tax compliance methods, and spending reductions in order to maintain spending levels. It is clear that finding offsets both for short-term extensions and for a long-term bill is increasingly difficult.

The ATM Coalition calls on Congress to take action. Kicking the can will not make the problem go away; rather, the problem will get bigger and more difficult to solve, especially as the next election draws closer.

Authorizing committees must finish their work and pass compelling, long-term policy and programmatic packages.

The tax-writing committees must make good on commitments to finding the payfors—preferably ongoing revenues that are transportation-related, sustainably structured, and sufficient to grow federal funding in order to substantially address transportation needs—or seek to exempt the long-term successor to MAP-21 from pay-go as was done for the Medicare Sustainable Growth Rate legislation earlier this year.

Both House and Senate leadership must prioritize action on highway and transit bill and establish—and articulate publicly—a clear procedural path forward.

Although we support H.R. 2353 as a necessary measure, the ATM Coalition believes that it is long past time to move a long-term bill with funding that is adequate to address the nation's transportation infrastructure needs, and that Congress should force no more delays and no more short-term extensions.

Sincerely,

The Americans for Transportation Mobility Coalition