

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce strongly supports H.R. 3763, “the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015 (The STRR Act),” intended to be incorporated into H.R. 22, the “DRIVE Act,” and urges the House to approve this legislation as expeditiously as practical to enable a conference committee to complete work and report legislation in time for Congress to approve it before the latest short term transportation bill extension expires on November 20.

The Chamber commends the House for addressing a substantial number of amendments to the legislation already, and looks forward to the House completing consideration of this bill this week. The Chamber believes H.R. 22 could be improved by adding two amendments to the bill:

- **Goodlatte-Marino permit streamlining:** The Chamber **strongly supports** this amendment to enhance and improve the underlying provisions of the Senate-passed version of H.R. 22 intended to coordinate and speed up the review and approval of permitting for complicated development projects.

On a related note, the Chamber **opposes** an amendment offered by Rep. Gosar that would also amend the permit streamlining provisions of H.R. 22. While the Chamber applauds Rep. Gosar’s leadership on the permit streamlining issue, the amendment would undo much of the important enhancements H.R. 22 would provide.

- **Denham FAAAA:** The Chamber **strongly supports** the bipartisan Denham, Corrine Brown, Costello and Ashford amendment regarding FAAAA preemption to clarify that the scope of preemption extends to state meal and rest break requirements and state bans on “piece rate” pay. Such clarification would ensure motor carriers can continue to operate efficiently and competitively, under nationally-standard federal regulations, as Congress intended, rather than being forced to adhere to a 50-state patchwork of rules governing driver hours and pay policies.

The Chamber is concerned that many amendments that the House will consider could impair the ability of Congress to complete work on a conference report of this crucial legislation. The Chamber strongly opposes several amendments:

- **Ex-Im Bank:** The Chamber **strongly opposes** all amendments related to the U.S. Export-Import Bank. Despite the assertions of sponsors, these amendments are poison pills intended

to derail reauthorization of the Bank. **The Chamber will include votes related to reauthorization of the Ex-Im in our *How They Voted* scorecard.**

Substantial reforms to Ex-Im included in this legislation have already secured overwhelming support in Congress, passing the Senate and House by votes of 64-29 and 313-118, respectively.

Failure to secure a long term reauthorization of Ex-Im would amount to unilateral disarmament in the face of other governments' far more aggressive export credit programs, which have provided their own exporters with significant financing support in recent years. Since Ex-Im's charter lapsed on June 30, American companies have been operating at a unique disadvantage in global markets, and lost sales and lost jobs are accumulating.

- **DeSantis Devolution:** The Chamber **strongly opposes** the DeSantis amendment because it promotes the idea of undercutting the long term viability of transportation funding through the false promise of “devolving” the federal role in transportation and transit projects. Shifting responsibility without sufficient resources to other levels of government is an unacceptable and unworkable solution for the problems plaguing American infrastructure.

The Chamber strongly supports stable and sufficient funding for transportation and transit infrastructure. The Chamber also believes that all options need to be on the table – including an increase in the gas tax – to expand funding in this area to meet the unmet demand for projects.

- **Schakowsky and Hank Johnson Litigation:** The Chamber also opposes amendments that would potentially and inappropriately encourage litigation such as the Schakowsky and Hank Johnson amendments. The Schakowsky amendment would result in increased discovery fishing expeditions in litigation while the Hank Johnson amendment would potentially result in increased insurance requirements for transportation companies that could serve as the basis for disproportionate damage awards.

The Chamber strongly supports the House amendment to H.R. 22 based on H.R. 3763 and urges the House to expeditiously approve this legislation. **The Chamber will include votes on, or in relation to, this legislation, including votes on amendments related to Ex-Im and other issues provided in this correspondence, in our annual *How They Voted* scorecard.**

Sincerely,



R. Bruce Josten