



*A bold voice for transportation workers*

July 22, 2014

Dear Senator:

As the Senate considers the Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2014 (H.R. 5021), I urge you to approve a final bill that ensures the Highway Trust Fund has sufficient revenue to avoid an immediate default and provides the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress an opportunity to consider a longer-term surface transportation bill. In addition, I urge you to reject a misguided amendment, expected to be offered, that would abdicate the federal responsibility to ensure a safe and modern multi-modal transportation network.

During Senate consideration of H.R. 5021, Finance Committee Chair Ron Wyden and Ranking Republican Orrin Hatch will offer a sensible amendment that will keep the Highway Trust Fund solvent during the height of the summer construction season. Without this infusion of revenues, states across the country will be forced to abandon pending transit and highway projects, endangering up to 700,000 jobs. Importantly, this amendment ensures that the Trust Fund is sustained, in part, by raising new revenue, a key principle that will guide any meaningful future funding strategy in support of our surface transportation system.

While we strongly support a short-term patch for the Highway Trust Fund, we believe Congress must be given the opportunity to finish a long-term bill during this legislative session. Investing in transportation infrastructure now is imperative. Unemployment remains stubbornly high and long-term investments would put millions back to work and provide states with the certainty to make lasting plans for transportation improvements. If Congress punts to next May, we will undoubtedly see a series of short-term extensions that will impede investment, economic growth and job creation.

Accordingly, we urge you to vote YES on an amendment to be offered by Senators Boxer, Carper and Corker, which would reduce the cost and duration of the legislation, sustaining the Highway Trust Fund through the calendar year. This would keep the Trust Fund solvent, allow the federal government to fulfill its commitments to reimburse states for transportation needs and give Congress the opportunity to have a meaningful debate on reauthorizing a long-term, bipartisan surface transportation bill in this session.

Across this nation, transit systems are cutting service and laying off workers despite record demand. These cuts negatively impact businesses that rely on safe and reliable public transit for their employees and disproportionately harm tens of millions of working Americans for whom public transit is their only viable transportation option. Similarly, during this era of neglect, our highways are crumbling, and too many bridges are structurally deficient and falling down. This is no accident. For decades, Congress has failed to adequately invest in transportation,

undermining economic growth and leaving trillions of dollars in long-overdue transportation projects in waiting. The tough decisions on financing and policy are not a mystery, and putting them off until the next Congress will not summon new wisdom. To the contrary, further delay will only maintain the status quo: keeping workers off the job, undercutting long-term planning and investment, and hindering the country's advance to a 21<sup>st</sup> century transportation system.

Some respond to the mounting needs of our national transportation system by insisting that difficult revenue decisions need not be made at all, and our transportation infrastructure challenges can be solved by simply reducing the role of the federal government. Senator Lee will offer a thoughtless "devolution" amendment that would dissolve the federal gas tax and dump nearly all revenue raising and responsibility to the states. Devolution is an unworkable idea that ignores the realities of 21<sup>st</sup> century commerce and transportation in which goods and people rely on an interstate system of movement. The Lee amendment amounts to an unfunded mandate on the states as they will be saddled with solving America's interstate transportation challenges. Put simply, the collective needs of the nation's freight and passenger transportation system are too large and interconnected to be met by a patchwork of competing state plans and tax and revenue agendas. We urge you to reject the Lee amendment.

The Senate has an opportunity this week to provide a workable patch to the Highway Trust Fund and do so in a way that will allow for a serious debate on a long-term bill. Waiting until the next deadline or crisis is irresponsible and will only further erode our decaying surface transportation network, stunt economic growth and idle millions of jobs. We urge you to vote in favor of the Carper-Boxer-Corker and Wyden-Hatch amendments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward Wytkind". The signature is fluid and somewhat abstract, with several loops and a long horizontal stroke at the bottom.

Edward Wytkind  
President