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AGC of America
THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA
Quality People. Quality Projects.



October 21, 2015

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio:

The Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) thanks you for introducing the bipartisan Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act (STRRA) of 2015. We urge the committee members to support its passage.

STRRA has many elements that AGC believes are necessary to continue the progress started in MAP-21 to make the surface transportation programs more efficient and cost effective while addressing our nation's growing transportation needs. The bill provides a multi-year authorization that will allow states to plan the needed projects and give our contractor members the assurance of three years of funding that will allow them to invest in new equipment and hire and train new employees.

Unfortunately, STRRA does not provide the significant increase in investment levels that we all know is needed for our federal highway and transit programs. In fact, STRRA fails to match the funding levels provided by the Senate-passed DRIVE Act. We urge the House and Senate to work together to ensure that a conference-negotiated bill provides at least the DRIVE Act funding levels.

AGC supports the new competitive grant freight program to facilitate the types of transportation improvements that will help U.S. businesses become more competitive in the global economy. However, we are concerned that of the funding allocated to the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects grant program, up to \$500 million could go to freight rail projects that may not currently be eligible for Highway Trust Fund dollars. When there is no funding increase, it is hard to justify an eligibility expansion.

AGC welcomes the steps taken to continue to improve on the expedited project delivery improvements that were a key element of success of MAP-21, including the creation of a pilot program allowing states to use their existing environmental laws and regulations instead of NEPA, expanding categorical exclusions, and eliminating duplicative environmental reviews. These reforms are critically important to streamline and expedite the delivery of critical transportation projects.

Our members have been extremely frustrated by the repeated short-term extensions of the program authorization and Highway Trust Fund bailouts over the past several years. We urge Congress to find a way to return stability to the Highway Trust Fund and we hope that is a priority for this reauthorization cycle. Without it, we are doomed to repeat the extensions that have been painful to all who are interested in improving our nation's infrastructure. We welcome the introduction of STRRA and look forward to working with you to ensure passage this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeffrey D. Shoaf".

Jeffrey D. Shoaf
Senior Executive Director, Government Affairs