



October 20, 2015

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

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

Dear Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio:

On behalf of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), our 1,500 member organizations, and the millions of Americans that depend on public transportation, I write to recognize your leadership in working to advance a bipartisan surface transportation authorization bill. Your efforts in drafting the “Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015” allows the important work on passage of transportation authorization legislation to move forward, and we look forward to the legislation being successfully reported out of committee.

We appreciate that the Committee is faced with a significant challenge of drafting a multi-year authorization bill in the absence of a companion revenue title. APTA’s recommendations call on Congress to pass a bill authorizing a six-year federal public transportation program that substantially increases federal investment, with predictable funding, to address long-term, major capital investments needed to bring existing transit infrastructure into a state of good repair, expand the existing infrastructure, support the operation and maintenance of such investment, and support research, training, and policy to meet the growing demand for safe, convenient and dependable public transportation service. With this in mind, while the bill does provide added certainty through a multi-year authorization period, the program funding levels are not sufficient to adequately address the state of good repair backlog as well as the future demand facing our communities. We look forward to continuing to work with Congress as it attempts to identify more resources that can be dedicated to the Highway Trust Fund and added to your bill to support investments in public transportation and highways.

APTA recognizes and applauds your effort to address the bus capital investment needs across this nation by increasing bus formula funding and by restoring a discretionary bus and bus facilities capital program to address significant fleet and facility procurement needs. APTA also appreciates that your bill provides for greater flexibility in bus procurement and human services transportation coordination. Additionally, we strongly support the bipartisan agreement reached on legislation to provide for a responsible extension of time for railroads to implement life-saving positive train control technology.

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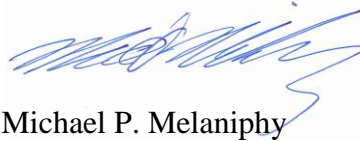
President & CEO
Michael P. Melaniphy

However, the funding limitations preclude the needed growth in the core formula and state of good repair programs. Further, we continue to maintain concerns about provisions in the bill that increase Buy America domestic content for rolling stock, as well as provisions that reduce the Federal share for transit capital investments and reduce the flexibility of state and local sponsors to utilize other Federal transportation funds.

Our comments are guided by the comprehensive recommendations developed by APTA's member organizations for both public transportation and high-speed and intercity passenger rail. While we understand that the recently introduced bill does not include a rail title, as the House has separately moved passenger rail legislation, we continue to support the creation of a robust federal high-speed and intercity passenger rail program.

Again, we commend you, along with Highways and Transit Subcommittee Chairman Sam Graves and Ranking Member Eleanor Holmes Norton in moving a comprehensive, multiyear, surface transportation authorization bill in a bipartisan fashion. Ultimately, failure to adequately invest at the federal level will only increase the already too large, and growing, backlog of state of good repair investment needs, inhibit the ability of transit providers to meet the growing demand for service, and result in higher long-term costs associated with maintaining the existing system. We stand ready to work with you and the members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee as this legislation moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael P. Melaniphy", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Michael P. Melaniphy
President & CEO

cc: Members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee