

October 21, 2015

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
House Transportation and Infrastructure
Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Ranking Member
House Transportation and Infrastructure
Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chairman, Subcommittee on Highways and
Transit
House Transportation and Infrastructure
Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Highways
and Transit
House Transportation and Infrastructure
Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster, Ranking Member DeFazio, Subcommittee Chairman Graves, and Ranking Member Norton,

We congratulate you on the release of the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015 (STRRA). We appreciate your hard work and persistence in moving forward with this important legislation.

We particularly want to express our strong support for Section 1401(c) (Interstate System Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Pilot Program) of the STRRA being considered by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. This section would allow States to consider the use of tolls for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Interstate highways in their respective states. In addition, this section streamlines the process for approval and implementation of state pilot programs so that states that are completely ready to move forward are able to do so.

Providing this type of flexibility to three (3) states is an important and modest step to enable states to meet the growing funding needs of the aging Interstate System.

While we recognize that tolling is not the solution to the federal Highway Trust Fund shortfall, tolling is one of many tools in the transportation funding tool box with a long and proven history as a user fee. With limited federal revenues available to support our nation's infrastructure, it only makes sense to give states the ability to choose the best way to pay for reconstruction of the vital Interstate highways within their borders. This flexibility, offered to a small number of states, provides a potential pathway to address the high-costs associated with Interstate System reconstruction and rehabilitation projects – projects that might otherwise languish for lack of adequate funding.

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For similar reasons we are also very supportive of Section 6015, (Surface Transportation System Funding Alternatives). We appreciate the difficulty Congress has had in finding ways to finance the needed improvements and preservation of the nation's surface transportation system. The proposed program to demonstrate user-based alternative revenue mechanisms to maintain the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund is a wise approach to empowering the states to explore and test new approaches to highway finance.

We look forward to working with the Committee to advance a reauthorization that promotes safety, greater mobility, productivity and provides a long-term source of funding for the federal-aid highway program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Jones", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patrick D. Jones
Executive Director & CEO