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PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION
ASSOCIATION

November 27, 2020

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The Honorable Susan M. Collins
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
HUD, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
HUD, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David E. Price
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation,
HUD, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
2358A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation,
HUD, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Collins, Ranking Member Reed, Chairman Price, and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

On behalf of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), which represents a \$74 billion industry that directly employs 435,000 people and supports millions of private-sector jobs, I write to thank you for your efforts to advance the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2021 (H.R. 7617 and S. ____) ("THUD Appropriations bill").

As you begin discussions on resolving the differences between the House and Senate THUD Appropriations bills, **we urge you to provide the highest possible level of funding for public transportation and passenger rail investments. Specifically, we urge you to provide at least \$13.4 billion for Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs, as provided by the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2019 (P.L. 116-6). We also urge you to provide at least \$2.8 billion for Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) passenger rail grants, as provided by the House THUD Appropriations bill.** As our nation's transit agencies work to maintain and restore essential services during the pandemic, these funds are critical to help our communities continue to provide safe and accessible mobility options.

In addition, we urge you to include COVID-19 emergency funding for public transit and passenger rail, as provided by the House THUD Appropriations bill. Specifically, we urge Congress to provide at least \$32 billion in funding for public transit as we work to maintain a lifeline and restore these essential services in each of our communities. Without additional emergency funding, public transit agencies will be forced to continue to reduce or eliminate services and furlough employees.

Both the House and Senate THUD Appropriations bill provide significant funding increases for Urbanized Area formula grants, State of Good Repair grants, Rural formula grants, and Buses and Bus Facilities formula and competitive grants, above levels authorized in the FAST Act Extension (P.L. 116-159), and we strongly support your efforts to increase investments in each of these transit programs. Importantly, we also strongly support the House THUD Appropriations bill provision that allows public transit agencies to request a 100 percent federal share for formula and competitive grants in Fiscal Year (FY) 2021. Furthermore, we urge you to allow transit agencies to use public transit funding for operating assistance grants in FY 2021.

Regarding Capital Investment Grants (CIG), we urge you to provide at least \$2.2 billion for CIG projects, as provided by the House THUD Appropriations bill. Moreover, we strongly support the provision that enables FTA to amend current full funding grant agreements that require additional federal funding as a result of COVID-19.

Regarding passenger rail grants, we strongly support House and Senate provisions to continue to enable commuter railroads to be eligible for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grants and recommend that you authorize commuter railroads to use these grants for the costs of operating and maintaining positive train control (PTC) technology after completing implementation. Commuter railroads face significant ongoing PTC operations and maintenance costs of at least \$160 million each year. In addition, we support the House THUD Appropriations bill provision that includes certain nonprofit associations as eligible recipients of CRISI grants.

We appreciate your support for Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grants, which can be an important source of additional competitive grant funding for public transportation and passenger rail projects. We strongly support the House THUD Appropriations bill provisions that provides 60 percent of these grants to projects in large urbanized areas and includes a specific set-aside for planning and design of public transit, transit-oriented development, and multimodal projects.

Finally, we greatly appreciate that both the House and Senate THUD Appropriations bills include provisions to prohibit implementation of the Rostenkowski Test, preventing a \$6 billion, 60 percent across-the-board cut to public transit formula funding for FY 2021. Although Congress blocked the Rostenkowski Test for FY 2021 in the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2021 and Other Extensions Act (P.L. 116-159), we encourage the continuation of this provision in the bill.

The Honorable Susan M. Collins, Jack Reed, David E. Price, and Mario Diaz-Balart

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Thank you for your strong support for public transportation and consideration of our conference priorities. We look forward to continuing to work with you to improve public transportation and benefit the nation.

Sincerely,



Paul P. Skoutelas
President and CEO

cc: The Honorable Richard C. Shelby, Chairman, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey, Chairwoman, Committee on Appropriations,
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Vice Chairman, Committee on Appropriations, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations,
U.S. House of Representatives

Members of the House and Senate THUD Subcommittees, Committee on Appropriations