

December XX, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan M. Collins
Chairman
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Collins, and Ranking Member Reed:

As you work to develop a final Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations bill, we urge you to continue to support critical investments in public transportation around the country by providing robust funding and clear direction for the Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program.

Congress authorized \$2.3 billion annually for CIG through Fiscal Year 2020 with bipartisan support in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. We ask that you include the strongest bill language possible to clearly direct the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to follow existing law by advancing the nearly 70 projects in the current CIG program pipeline. DOT should continue to move eligible projects into the project development and engineering phases; rate, evaluate, and recommend projects for future funding; and sign Full Funding Grant Agreements and Small Starts Grant Agreements promptly when project sponsors are ready to execute their grant agreements.

America's population is growing, presenting major transportation challenges for communities across the nation. More people, vehicles, and freight crowding our roads translates to increased costs and delays for commuters and businesses alike. From 2002 to 2012, delay times experienced by travelers worsened by nearly 20 percent. Congestion now wastes 6.7 billion hours and three billion gallons of fuel nationwide at a cost of \$154.2 billion per year.

A critical tool for combatting congestion is federal investment in public transportation. Transit ridership in the United States has increased 39 percent over the past 20 years, making federal funding for transit through the CIG program more important than ever. The CIG program, through its New Starts, Small Starts, and Core Capacity grants, allows communities to compete for funding to build and improve subway, commuter rail, light rail, bus rapid transit, streetcar, and ferry projects that move people more efficiently, improve quality of life, and increase economic growth and sustainability.

The significant benefits of investment in the CIG program to both large cities and growing communities across the country cannot be overstated. According to DOT, every \$1 billion of federal investment in public transportation supports approximately 13,000 jobs and an estimated \$3.5 billion in economic activity. Nearly 90 percent of public transportation trips directly benefit the economy, increasing access for tens of millions of riders each day to jobs, education, healthcare, social services, and local businesses. Federal investment in transit also leads to increased economic development in the areas surrounding transit stations, increasing property values of nearby homes and businesses by as much as 130 percent. These benefits reach far beyond the communities in which the projects are built, with more than 2,700 transit component manufacturing facilities and companies in 49 states employing tens of thousands of workers supporting transit projects.

Our local communities are strongly committed to investing in transit. In fact, Federal support through the CIG program provides only 45 percent of the costs of the average project. However, the need for increased federal investment in transit is evident in the number of cities and transit projects competing for CIG funding each year. There are nearly 70 projects in the current CIG program pipeline in 23 states, and requests to participate in the CIG program far exceed the program's current funding levels. Robust funding is needed to meet that demand and uphold the commitment made to communities across the United States in the FAST Act by bipartisan majorities in Congress.

We urge you to fund the CIG program at the highest levels possible and specifically direct DOT to continue this vital program, which helps communities around the nation expand public transportation options to increase connectivity, reduce congestion, and boost economic growth.

Sincerely,