



AMERICAN  
PUBLIC  
TRANSPORTATION  
ASSOCIATION

July 18, 2017

The Honorable Diane Black  
Chairman  
Committee on Budget  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Yarmuth  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Budget  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

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Richard A. White

Dear Chairman Black and Ranking Member Yarmuth:

On behalf of the more than 1,500 member organizations of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), I write to express our opposition to several proposals related to public transportation included in the “Building a Better America” FY 2018 Budget Resolution released today. Public transportation infrastructure programs serve national interests and have strong bipartisan support, and this budget proposes devastating cuts at a time when the federal government should be investing more, not less, in our nation’s infrastructure.

Specifically, the budget resolution proposes to phase out the Federal Transit Administration’s Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program for new capacity and expansion (New Starts, Small Starts and Core Capacity) projects. An analysis by the Economic Development Research Group and the American Public Transportation Association has determined that a proposal to halt the robust pipeline of these worthy and vetted projects would put 800,000 jobs at risk, including 502,000 construction and related jobs and an additional 300,000 longer term jobs associated with economic productivity. This would result in a possible loss of \$90 billion in economic output.

Additionally, the resolution would eliminate funding for the oversubscribed Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program, reduce support for Amtrak, and prohibit funding for high-speed rail. APTA believes that both Congress and the Administration should work to increase in the current federal investment levels for public transportation and intercity passenger rail systems. Proposals to eliminate or reduce investment in key programs are clearly in the wrong direction.

Public transportation supports our national economy and main street businesses as well and gives Americans crucial mobility options. Nearly 90 percent of public transportation trips directly benefit the economy by getting people to work and connecting them to local businesses. The role of the federal government is key to restoring our national surface transportation network,

including public transportation, to a state-of-good repair and meeting demands for new capacity.

Congress reaffirmed this federal role when it authorized \$2.3 billion annually, through 2020, for the CIG program in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, which was overwhelmingly approved by bipartisan votes of 83-16 in the Senate and 359-65 in the House of Representatives. Eliminating this program in the middle of the authorization would pull the rug out from under communities that have spent local, state and federal resources advancing their projects through the CIG process with the expectation that Congress would make good on the commitment made to this program under the FAST Act.

The FAST Act also reaffirmed Congressional support for Amtrak and authorized nearly \$5.5 billion through 2020 for Amtrak's National Network, which includes operating support for long-distance routes that move more than 4 million passengers each year on its 15 routes covering 23 states. Further, the FAST Act introduced new accounting, administrative and managerial reforms to ensure that these dollars are spent efficiently, and these measures should be given time to be fully implemented and evaluated before further changes are considered.

We urge Members of Congress to strongly oppose proposed funding reductions to these programs, and we look forward to continuing to work with Congress to implement all FAST Act programs at their authorized levels. Also, we call on the Administration and Congress to pass bipartisan legislation to dramatically increase investment in public transportation and other infrastructure, in addition to fully funding transportation programs under the FAST Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard A. White". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Richard A. White  
Acting President and CEO

Cc: The Members of the House Committee on Budget