



**AMERICAN
PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION
ASSOCIATION**

March 15, 2017

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

On behalf of more than 1,500 member organizations of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), I write to you today to emphasize the importance of the merit-based evaluation and selection process of the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Capital Investment Grant program (49 U.S.C. Section 5309).

As you know, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act (Pub. L. No. 114-94) authorizes \$2.3 billion annually through 2020 for the Capital Investment Grant program, with the goal of providing critical funding for fixed guideway capital projects such as new and expanded commuter rail, light rail, streetcars, bus rapid transit and ferries. Funding is made available to project sponsors through the New Starts, Small Starts, Core Capacity programs, and committed by the Secretary of Transportation through a Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA).

The FFGA evaluation process for the Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program is widely regarded as transparent, comprehensive, and performance-driven. The Government Accountability Office has recognized FTA's CIG program as a model for other federal transportation programs because of its use of a rigorous and systematic evaluation process. Projects that ultimately enter into FFGAs with FTA stand out for their commitment of local and state funding and multiple societal benefits. APTA, on behalf of its member organizations, does not advocate for individual projects during the FFGA evaluation process, but believes that projects which successfully complete the evaluation process and are recommended for funding should be advanced. In the two decades since the FFGA process was created, no project has failed to secure final signature after successfully meeting evaluation criteria and receiving a recommended rating. For that reason, FTA's decision to delay execution of the FFGA for the Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project is concerning.

As you consider your goals for the Fiscal Year 2018 budget and the companion FTA Report to Congress on Annual Funding Recommendations for the Capital Investment Grant Program, we urge you to maintain the soundness of the CIG Program and execute FFGAs for meritorious projects, such as the Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project, that meet or exceed the statutory requirements, having been successfully vetted and previously recommended.

Sincerely,

Richard A. White
Acting President and CEO

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Cc: Matthew Welbes, Executive Director, Federal Transit Administration