

Dear Majority Leader Mitch McConnell:

On July 31st, 2015, the authority for the recently-passed extension of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), which pays for our country's major surface transportation infrastructure needs, will expire. We reluctantly supported this short-term extension of the HTF to prevent the disruption of important, ongoing construction projects that are needed to repair and rebuild our roads, bridges, and public transportation systems while creating good-paying jobs. However, it is well past time to enact a long-term surface transportation reauthorization bill.

As such, we are writing to urge you to schedule action that meets the following benchmarks to provide a path toward enactment of a robust, long-term transportation bill.

- Hearings in each of the authorizing committees by June 23rd
- Bipartisan mark-ups in all authorizing committees by July 10th that include robust increases for highways, transit, passenger rail, and safety programs
- A long-term bill on the full Senate floor by July 20th

Despite the fact that the original HTF expiration date of May 31st was established 11 months ago, the Republican majority has yet to demonstrate progress in drafting bipartisan legislation or to hold one committee mark-up on a long-term transportation reauthorization bill. This troubling inactivity in the face of a looming transportation funding shut down and a long-term transportation investment deficit that has reached crisis levels stands in stark contrast to previous efforts.

Delay and inaction on funding transportation is not acceptable. Under Democratic leadership in the Senate and Republican leadership in the House, Congress held four committee mark-ups, passed legislation through both chambers, reported a final bill out of a conference committee, and ultimately passed the bipartisan Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) by July of 2012. This legislation gave our states, local communities, and businesses the stability and certainty they need to carry out cost-effective improvements to our nation's transportation infrastructure.

We are calling on you to follow the practice established by previous Congresses in taking our nation's transportation needs seriously by moving forward with a robust, long-term surface transportation bill. President Obama has proposed a six-year transportation bill that would increase public investment in our road, public transit, and passenger rail systems by 45 percent, but the new Republican Congress has yet to mark-up on this proposal or take steps to increase much-needed funding for transportation stakeholders. For the future economic prosperity of this country, this Congress should be considering the President's framework as a starting point for bipartisan negotiations.

We have waited long enough. Americans rely on a strong transportation system to travel, commute, and move goods across the country. Another temporary HTF patch would only perpetuate uncertainty, slow construction projects, and hamper economic development and hiring in all of our states. To move forward, we must show the American people real progress on a robust, long-term transportation bill.

Sincerely,

HARRY REID
United States Senator
Nevada

RICHARD J. DURBIN
United States Senator
Illinois

CHARLES E. SCHUMER
United States Senator
New York

PATTY MURRAY
United States Senator
Washington

BARBARA BOXER
United States Senator
California

RON WYDEN
United States Senator
Oregon

BILL NELSON
United States Senator
Florida

SHERROD BROWN
United States Senator
Ohio