

PROTECT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION FUNDING IN HR 7

Support the Nadler-LaTourette-Blumenauer-Gibson-Crowley-Turner-Rangel-Grimm Amendment to Restore Federally Guaranteed Transit Funding

Dear Colleague:

When the House considers the “American Energy & Infrastructure Jobs Act of 2012” (HR 7), we intend to offer an amendment to restore dedicated, guaranteed funding for public transportation programs. HR 7 makes drastic changes to the way transit is funded in the surface transportation authorization bill. Our amendment eliminates these changes and restores a permanent funding mechanism for mass transit.

Since 1983, when the *Surface Transportation Assistance Act* was signed into law, 2.86 cents in motor fuels taxes has been deposited into the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund to provide a dedicated stable source of funding for public transportation programs. HR 7 eliminates the Mass Transit Account and dedicates that 2.86 cents to highway programs. The bill moves transit and other public transportation programs into a new “Alternative Transportation Fund,” which would be dependent on appropriations from general revenue. Although the bill makes a one-time transfer of \$40 billion into the Alternative Transportation Fund to cover funding for those programs through the life of the bill, there is no guarantee for public transportation funding beyond FY 2016. Such a reality would make it difficult, if not impossible, for transit agencies to develop reliable long-term capital plans, and it would leave the future of the program in doubt.

Public transportation agencies around the country are already struggling to maintain current levels of service and keep the system in a state of good repair. Removing federally guaranteed funding could result in a virtual construction and service freeze, the effects of which would be felt by riders, businesses, contractors, manufacturers and suppliers around the country. Transit agencies may have to take on more debt in order to finance capital projects, and it could result in increased fares for our constituents.

There is no reason to make such a drastic change in how we finance public transportation. Our amendment would restore the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund and the 2.86 cents dedicated funding stream for public transportation programs. It would eliminate the Alternative Trust Fund, make the Highway Trust Fund whole, and allow it to once again fund both highways and mass transit.

Our amendment conforms to 30 years of federal law. It is a simple, common sense measure to restore the status quo. We urge you to support it. If you have any questions, please contact Lisette Morton w/Rep. Nadler (lisette.morton@mail.house.gov or 5-5635), John Miceli w/Rep. LaTourette (john.miceli@mail.house.gov or 55731), or Tyler Frisbee w/Rep. Blumenauer (tyler.frisbee@mail.house.gov or 5-4811).

Sincerely,

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