



March 20, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Republican Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

We appreciate all of your work to stimulate the economy and protect the nation's citizens during this critical time. On behalf of the American Highway Users Alliance (the Highway Users), a coalition of 300 organizations including companies, trade associations, safety advocacy groups, and motoring clubs that represent millions of motorists, we **urge Congress to include distribution of increased formula funding for highways authorized under S. 2302, the Senate's transportation reauthorization, in economic relief legislation at the earliest possible time and no later than the package that will come after the one that was just released yesterday.**

Adding increased formula funding for highways to a relief package in the very near future will be an investment in our nation that is critically needed to keep the country moving and maintain and create jobs. President Franklin D. Roosevelt invested in infrastructure during the Great Depression and America reaped the benefits. The vast construction efforts through the New Deal resulted in thousands of highways, bridges, dams and water sewer systems that we rely on today. Such an investment will focus our limited dollars in an area where there is already tremendous need that has a direct impact on every American. The recently released 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of USDOT's Conditions and Performance Report on Highways, Bridges and Transit identifies a \$786.4 billion backlog of highway and bridge investments that are cost beneficial. Plus, this investment is a jobs creator: for every \$1 billion spent on transportation, it in turn creates at least 30,000 jobs. And this work can continue outside in the open air with workers keeping a safe distance from each other.

Here are **other policy items** that the Highway Users supports for prompt enactment as part of economic relief bills:

- The **Highway Users supports** the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (**AASHTO**) **request for \$16.7 billion in supplemental federal transportation funding to backstop state revenue shortfalls expected due to COVID-19**. These funds are vitally important for the states to maintain our highways and keep trucks, goods and services moving during this critical time and to ensure that people can get to the hospital, work, and other vital appointments.
- **The federal Highway Trust Fund (HTF) must be prioritized. The HTF, which provides a steady source of investment in our essential infrastructure, needs to be shored up as revenue will severely decline from massive reductions in fuel consumption and drop-offs in the sales tax revenue expected due to COVID-19.**
- **Congress should authorize the Secretary of Transportation to grant a temporary waiver of the federally-mandated maximum vehicle weights for the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways for the delivery of emergency relief supplies** as defined by the Federal Highway Administration in its implementation of Section 1511 in the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act. **There is a need for uniformity on weight exemptions** and the **ability to suspend the need for state permits** that are required under existing law during this critical time. Current federal provisions authorizing states to allow the operation of heavier trucks that are supporting national emergency response are ill-suited to the COVID-19 situation. They were designed for short-term regional emergencies such as hurricanes, earthquakes or flooding. New authority is needed to address the unique situation the nation is currently facing. Not all states have authorized the operation of heavier trucks, and those that have acted do not have uniform rules, creating confusion among trucking companies who are trying to provide emergency relief while complying with a myriad of conflicting requirements. Furthermore, federal law requires that trucks must have a permit to operate in each state, which is time-consuming and is further taxing state permit offices that are already understaffed due to COVID-related concerns. Congress must act to ensure that carriers can provide desperately needed relief supplies without dealing with a confusing, time-consuming process.
- The **trucking industry must be fully supported** to ensure food, water, fuel, goods, medical supplies, mail and packages get to Americans who so desperately need them. As you know, the trucking industry is vital to our survival. The Highway Users asks Congress to **support keeping rest stops open** to ensure the safety of truck drivers and motorists. Food and fuel for the trucking industry must be a priority.

Congress should make an investment in highway infrastructure today to ensure that our country can succeed when we emerge from the pandemic. **Please include increased funding for highways in economic relief legislation at the earliest possible time and no later than the package that will come after the one that was just released yesterday.** If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at [lauraperrotta@highway.org](mailto:lauraperrotta@highway.org) or 571-239-0765. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Perrotta". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laura Perrotta, CAE  
President and CEO