



June 15, 2020

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
Chairman  
House Committee on Transportation  
& Infrastructure

The Honorable Sam Graves  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Transportation  
& Infrastructure

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Chair  
House Subcommittee on Highways  
& Transit

The Honorable Rodney Davis  
Ranking Member  
House Subcommittee on Highways  
& Transit

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members DeFazio, Graves, Norton and Davis:

On behalf of the American Highway Users Alliance (Highway Users), a coalition of 300 organizations including companies, trade associations, safety advocacy groups, and motoring clubs that represent millions of motorists and serve as the united voice of the motoring public, we applaud the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for moving forward with the transportation reauthorization process through the introduction of H.R. 7095, the "INVEST in America Act." The deadline to reauthorize surface transportation programs is quickly approaching. We are hopeful that a bipartisan, bicameral process will move forward to ensure a long-term bill will be signed into law before the FAST Act expires. Failure to do so could halt important road and bridge projects and will further disrupt America's economic recovery.

The Highway Users members are especially appreciative of the robust funding levels and programmatic stability provided by the bill. The five-year authorization period and the \$319 billion allocated for highways, provide a 42% increase over FAST Act levels. The combination allows for the funding stability necessary for both industry and State transportation department planning purposes. From a Highway Users perspective, this is extremely positive.

There are a few areas we would like to discuss as the reauthorization process proceeds. First and foremost, on the issue of funding, we would ask that the bill retain the 4:1 program ratio for highways and transit until a plan is in place to address the massive highway and bridge program shortfalls. The 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of the USDOT's Conditions and Performance Report on Highways, Bridges and Transit identifies a \$786.4 billion backlog of highway and bridge investments. The Highway Users feels it is extremely important to maintain a minimum of an 80/20 highway/transit split to ensure the public will benefit from prompt delivery of needed highway investments. This will become particularly critical if budget rules require a reduction of total funding available for reauthorization. While Congress has infused mass transit with COVID-19 relief, they have yet to provide relief on the highway side. Highway investment needs will continue to grow throughout the summer and into the fall.

Furthermore, the Highway Users members are opposed to diverting highway revenues for non-highway purposes beyond what is currently allowed under existing law, especially with the massive backlog of highway and bridge investments. The current program has appropriate flexibility for States to tailor different federal priorities to local needs. The "Fix it First" goals within the bill are problematic from a Highway Users perspective. Building new highway capacity is something we support for safety, congestion, and the benefit of our economy. States should retain the current flexibility, particularly on the National Highway System, to add capacity as

needed. And, already, the vast majority of highway program investments are not used for capacity increases.

The Highway Users are most appreciative of the substantial funding increase for the Highway Safety Improvement Program included in H.R. 7095. Working to reduce the over 36,000 fatalities that occur on our roadways annually is one of our top priorities. We look forward to a continued dialogue regarding proposals designed at permitting the flexing of FHWA funds to non-infrastructure projects. Behavioral programs funded by National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) should be robust and non-transferable. Funding levels for both “hard” and “soft” safety programs should be well-defined, transparent, and predictable to stakeholders of each program. The flex provisions make program accountability problematic.

The Highway Users have some concerns with Section 4306. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration conducted an extensive rulemaking process in the development of its recently completed Hours of Service (HOS) final rule. This process included the analysis of substantial research and input provided by Highway Users members, who felt the existing HOS requirements lacked the flexibility for motor carriers to truly achieve the highest levels of safety on our roads. We discourage Congress from delaying the full implementation of the agency’s HOS final rule, which was carefully crafted to meet the needs of diverse industry stakeholders, while promoting greater highway safety for all users.

Finally, the Highway Users supports the language and funding levels for the safety-related clearinghouses in Section 1608. These vitally important programs help to drive down fatalities, educate the public, and make our roadways safer.

The Highway Users members are eager to work with the Committee as the process moves forward. We are here to serve as a resource for you and look forward to working together to enact bipartisan legislation this summer. Addressing the nation’s infrastructure needs will help every individual and business as we emerge from the pandemic. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [lauraperrotta@highways.org](mailto:lauraperrotta@highways.org) or 571-239-0765. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Laura Perrotta, CAE  
President and CEO

cc:

The Honorable John Barrasso, Chair, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee  
The Honorable Thomas R. Carper, Ranking Member, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee