

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
United States Congress  
H-232, US Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

October 23, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker:

The US Public Interest Research Group writes to express support for an economic recovery package that includes transportation investment specifically targeted to address immediate needs, create the highest possible number of jobs, and produce long-term reductions in oil dependence, carbon emissions and traffic congestion.

Our country faces vast funding gaps in the transportation sector at a time when thousands of bridges are in need of repair and demand for public transportation is booming. To meet these needs, the transportation provisions included in H.R. 7110, the package which passed in the House last month, should be improved by increasing the capital funding investment and operating grants for transit and intercity rail and by expressly directing highway funds to repair of existing roads and structurally-deficient bridges.

For the first time in decades, Americans are driving less and using public transportation much more. This trend has continued even as gas prices have leveled. Metropolitan areas small and large have proposed new transit projects that would stimulate economic growth, reduce congestion, and improve transportation options.

**Investment in public transportation creates close to 20 percent more jobs than new road or bridge projects.**

According to a study by the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership, for every \$1.25 billion invested in new public transportation projects, nearly 51,300 jobs are created. By contrast, only 43,200 jobs are created per every \$1.25 billion spent on building new roads. (<http://www.sierraclub.org/sprawl/report04/transit.asp>)

Operating grants for transit agencies will put the most Americans to work immediately and help struggling agencies meet growing demand for service amid increased costs. In fact, every \$1 billion invested in transit operations generates 60,000 jobs. ([http://www.apta.com/research/info/online/economic\\_importance.cfm#link6](http://www.apta.com/research/info/online/economic_importance.cfm#link6))

Finally, funds allocated to the national highway system should be expressly directed to fixing and preserving existing capacity with a specific focus on structurally-deficient bridges, of which there are more than 74,000 nationwide. State DOT's should be held accountable for the use of economic recovery funds to ensure that back-logged maintenance and repair projects are prioritized.

An economic recovery measure that contains robust and intelligent investment in transit and rail and repair of our crumbling roads and bridges would put people to work immediately and demonstrate a long term commitment from the Congress to meeting our country's most-pressing transportation challenges.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue,

John Krieger  
Staff Attorney

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