



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

Item 5

MEMORANDUM

June 11, 2014

TO: Transportation Planning Board

FROM: Gerald K. Miller
Acting Co-Director, Department of
Transportation Planning

RE: Letters Sent/Received Since the May 21TPB Meeting

The attached letters were sent/received since the May 21 TPB meeting. The letters will be reviewed under Agenda 5 of the June 18 TPB agenda.

Attachments



NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

May 21, 2014

The Honorable Ben Cardin
United States Senate
SH-509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Protect the Highway Trust Fund from Insolvency—Now and Into the Future

Dear Senator Cardin,

A day we have long feared is finally upon us: the federal Highway Trust Fund will be insolvent as soon as July of this year. And MAP-21, the authorizing legislation for transportation infrastructure investment in our country, is set to expire at the end of September.

As the federally designated metropolitan planning organization for the National Capital Region, a growing region of more than 5 million people, we urgently request your help—and soon.

Insolvency will result in significant administrative burdens and immediate unmet transportation needs. Agencies responsible for keeping our roadways and transit systems safe and in a state of good repair have programmed nearly \$2 billion in federal funding to spend on hundreds of improvements this year. Many of the projects address critical safety needs. Insolvency will put agencies in the impossible position of deciding which projects to keep funding and which to halt.

Disruptions in the flow of federal dollars will also threaten job growth and economic recovery in our region. And they will make it harder to maintain mobility for the federal workforce and for the millions of people who visit our nation's capital each year.

Imminent insolvency is not our only worry, however.

The Highway Trust Fund needs a more sustainable source of revenue for the long-term. Agencies need greater predictability in order to plan the major, long-term transportation investments we know we need. One-time cash infusions and other short-term funding fixes are not sufficient to meet these challenges.

In 2013, both states in our region—Maryland and Virginia—took historic steps to raise new revenue for transportation at the state level, by raising user fees and other taxes to continue investing in critical infrastructure. The District of Columbia took similar steps five years ago.

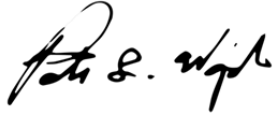
Now it's time for the federal government to do its part. Federal per-gallon excise taxes on motor fuels, traditionally the main source of revenue for the Highway Trust Fund, have not been increased in over 20 years, during which time inflation has eroded nearly 40 percent of their purchasing power. The result: more and more transfers of general fund revenues and other one-time fixes have been used to fill the widening gap between traditional revenue sources and our growing transportation needs.

We urge you to take decisive action now to replenish the Highway Trust Fund, and to secure more sustainable funding for transportation into the future when you reauthorize MAP-21 later this year.

Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Gerald Miller, acting co-director of transportation planning at the Transportation Planning Board. He can be reached by phone at 202.962.3319, or by e-mail at gkmiller@mwkog.org.

We hope we can count on your help in this exceptionally urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick Wojahn". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "P" and "W".

Patrick Wojahn
Chair, National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

One Region Moving Forward

May 28, 2014

District of Columbia
Bladensburg*
Bowie
Charles County
College Park
Frederick
Frederick County
Gaithersburg
Greenbelt
Montgomery County
Prince George's County
Rockville
Takoma Park
Alexandria
Arlington County
Fairfax
Fairfax County
Falls Church
Loudoun County
Manassas
Manassas Park
Prince William County

*Adjunct Member

Honorable Patrick Wojahn, Chair
National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board
777 North Capitol Street, NE
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Chair Wojahn:

On behalf of the Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments I am writing in follow up to my letter of January 8 recommending that the Transportation Planning Board (TPB), when adopting the Regional Transportation Priorities Plan, identify cost-effective strategies and opportunities to reduce emissions to help meet the regional goals.

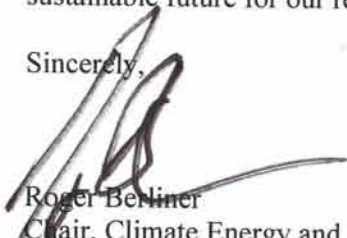
CEEPC realizes that it may now be too late to incorporate these considerations into this year's actions on the Region Transportation Priorities Plan (RTPP) and the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP), so is requesting the TPB to start now to include consideration of the impact on the region's greenhouse gas emission reduction goals as it updates the RTPP and during the annual update to the CLRP and similar plans.

We understand that TPB will identify focus areas or points of emphasis to incorporate into the 2015 CLRP Call for Projects in the coming months. We urge you to include environmental, climate change and air quality as points of emphasis as a first step toward better alignment of transportation investments with our region's established environmental goals. CEEPC looks forward to assisting TPB put in place actions identified in the *Gold Book* compilation of best practices for local governments and the *What Would It Take* scenario, as well as other needed actions, to move forward together to address our transportation and environmental goals.

CEEPC is making this recommendation as the principal policy adviser to the MWCOG Board on climate change, energy and other environmental issues. The MWCOG Board of Directors committed to address climate change in 2008 when it adopted the [National Capital Region Climate Change Report](#). The Board set specific greenhouse gas reduction targets for the region and sets forth recommendations for achieving these targets, including for the transportation sector.

We look forward to working together to advance our common goals to create a more livable and sustainable future for our region.

Sincerely,



Roger Berliner
Chair, Climate Energy and Environment Policy Committee
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments