

# National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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## **DRAFT LETTER FOR TPB CONSIDERATION**

November 17, 2010

Member of Congress from the Metropolitan Washington Delegation  
Address  
Address

Dear Member of Congress:

On behalf of the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), I am writing to emphasize the necessity of enacting a new surface transportation authorization bill. The TPB has developed the enclosed set of Policy Principles which it hopes can serve as a resource in crafting the authorization to follow SAFETEA-LU.

As the federally designated metropolitan planning organization for the National Capital Region, the TPB recently updated and approved its FY2010 Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP), which identifies all regionally significant transportation projects that are planned and reasonably able to be funded between 2010 and 2040. As part of this effort, the TPB conducted an extensive analysis of future revenues and costs, and the outlook is bleak. Several highway projects were removed from the CLRP for lack of funding, and other projects had to be delayed or significantly scaled back. The needs of the Washington Area Metropolitan Transit Authority (WMATA) are particularly acute – in addition to requiring considerable resources to maintain the system in a state of good repair, budget shortfalls indicate that WMATA will lack capacity to accommodate the region's impending population, employment, and household growth. These and other infrastructure needs are vital to serving the nation's capital, but are largely at a standstill due to funding constraints.

The current surface transportation authorizing legislation, SAFETEA-LU, expired in September of 2009, and the continued extension of this bill is an unsustainable means of providing long-term transportation services and investment. A new surface transportation authorizing bill is necessary to address these critical issues. In addition to the enclosed Policy Principles, the TPB has a variety of other information and technical resources, and would be happy to share these with you or your staff at any time. Please don't hesitate to contact Ronald Kirby, Director of the Department of Transportation Planning at [rkirby@mwkog.org](mailto:rkirby@mwkog.org), with any information requests.

Sincerely,

David Snyder  
Chair  
National Capital Region  
Transportation Planning Board

# Policy Principles for the 2009 Authorization of Federal Surface Transportation Programs

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- 1 Fundamental changes are needed in the current structure and funding of federal surface transportation programs: current planning, programming, and environmental processes are overly cumbersome and inefficient, and inadequate funding levels are resulting in serious under-investment in transportation.
- 2 An explicit program focus is needed to put and keep the nation's transportation infrastructure in a state of good repair, and to ensure that it is operated efficiently and safely.
- 3 Decisions on investment in new transportation capacity should be based on a rigorous and comprehensive analysis of economic, social and environmental benefits and costs, which assesses all modal and intermodal options with uniform evaluation procedures and criteria.
- 4 Federal transportation policy should provide for increased federal funding focused on metropolitan congestion and other metropolitan transportation challenges, with stronger partnerships between federal, state, regional and local transportation officials.
- 5 A substantial increase in federal transportation funding will be needed to address the current under-investment in the nation's transportation system, and should be sought from:
  - Increases in federal fuel taxes or other user-based taxes and fees;
  - Pricing strategies enabled by emerging technology for all modes of travel, including rates that vary by time of day, type of vehicle, level of emissions, and specific infrastructure segments used;
  - Inclusion of major transportation investments in legislation to create national infrastructure banks or bonding programs; and
  - Auction of pollution emissions allowances.

*Approved September 17, 2008*