

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

One Region Moving Forward

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

July 10, 2014

SAMPLE

Re: COG Support of the Replenishment of the Highway Trust Fund

Dear Congressman/Senator:

The COG Board of Directors strongly urges you to support the replenishment of the Highway Trust Fund to ensure continued and sustained federal investment in the nation's and this region's transportation system. Securing additional revenue sources dedicated to transportation is imperative to maintaining our regional transportation system and keeping our growing National Capital Region moving forward.

The federal Highway Trust Fund will be insolvent as soon as July of this year. 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.

Absent replenishment, the Highway Trust fund would not be able to meet any new obligations, leading to a drastic reduction in funds for federal transportation programs. We encourage Congress and the Administration to act to address replenishment of the Highway Trust Fund to provide at least current federal funding levels for fiscal year 2015 and beyond.

Transportation investments directly promote the Region Forward goals supported by the Council of Governments, local jurisdictions, businesses, nonprofits, and other civic groups in your jurisdiction. The Regional Transportation Priorities Plan lays out the near-term, ongoing, and long-term strategies needed for transportation in the metropolitan region. Additionally, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transportation Authority's Momentum strategic plan was developed to guide investment in public transportation over the next 10 years, including ongoing operations, infrastructure renewal and upkeep, and potential capacity expansion.

If the region is to maintain its current transportation system and make the needed capacity investments for the future to meet population and economic growth, significant additional transportation funding is needed. Under MAP-21, federal funding for transportation has stayed flat in dollar terms, while the federal gas tax rate which supports the Highway Trust fund remains unchanged since 1993, while their revenues have continued to decline. Revenue increases to keep up with inflation and enable the funding investments to match the growing economy and population are critical and immediate needs.

The State of Maryland and the Commonwealth of Virginia both passed major transportation revenue acts in 2013, and the District of Columbia is dedicating increasing funding from its general fund for transportation improvements. 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 and combustion efficiency have eroded nearly 40 percent of their purchasing power. As the seat of the federal government, we, the region, are asking the federal government to do more to ensure regional mobility and prosperity.

The COG Board of Directors urges you to take decisive action now to replenish the Highway Trust Fund and to secure more sustainable funding for transportation into the future. If you have questions about the region's needs and support for renewed federal transportation funding, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Phil Mendelson
Chairman, COG Board of Directors

cc: COG Board of Directors