



A bold voice for transportation workers

Support the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I urge you to vote for H.R. 3763, the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015 (STRRA). We commend Chairman Shuster, Ranking Member DeFazio, Subcommittee Chair Graves, and Subcommittee Ranking Member Norton for finalizing a long-overdue, bipartisan and multi-year surface transportation bill. While the bill is imperfect, moving forward on this legislation will put workers back on the job, reduce congestion, alleviate freight chokepoints, and provide states with the certainty they need to make lasting improvements to our surface transportation system and infrastructure.

At present, the state of our transportation network is in dire shape. A system that was once the envy of the entire world has fallen into disrepair, as Congress has failed to authorize a long-term bill or dedicate sufficient federal investment to transportation. Fortunately, moving this bill forward will help create the long-term certainty our nation needs to meet the demands facing our transit systems, highways and bridges, and multi-modal freight network. These guarantees will help improve operating needs, state of good repair problems and advance a large backlog of important projects. However, we do remain concerned that the funding in this bill is inadequate and believe that Congress must use this authorization as an opportunity to finally increase federal transportation spending to meet the system's overwhelming demands.

The bill makes a number of positive improvements for our transportation system and the workers who serve as the backbone for its effective movement. For transit workers, STRRA requires the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to take a long-overdue step to address the assault crisis facing transit operators across the nation by requiring the agency to issue a rule on how to effectively mitigate workplace violence. The legislation would also examine important transit worker safety, health, and training issues. Similarly, it advances the safety needs of emergency responders by ensuring they have greater access to information in order to effectively prepare for incidents involving flammable liquids.

We are also pleased the committee has leveraged the bill to make important contributions to address the needs of our manufacturing and railroad sectors. By increasing the FTA's minimum domestic content standards for rolling stock procurements, the bill will help ensure U.S. taxpayer investments promote domestic employment opportunities. We also support how the Positive Train Control (PTC) extension is handled in the bill. While we have long called for carriers to be responsible to the original statutory deadline, we are pleased that the extension would hold carriers accountable by requiring them to demonstrate tangible progress on implementation before granting any additional extensions.

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

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Edward Wytkind, President / Larry I. Willis, Secretary-Treasurer



The Committee bill includes significantly improved language from the Senate Drive Act on the use of hair specimen for Department of Transportation (DOT) drug testing standards. Specifically, it keeps intact DOTs long-standing protocols for employee drug testing by deferring technical and scientific matters to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) before the DOT ultimately adopts standards for testing workers. The bill also does not include attacks on longshore and other port workers put forward by certain Senators during consideration of the DRIVE Act.

While we look forward to working with the Committee to advance H.R. 3763, we will be pursuing improvements to this legislation. In addition to the need to raise overall funding levels, language should be included to examine the treatment of employees affected by public-private-partnerships (P3s), as well as improving the safety of motor carriers so that the industry is both transparent and accountable.

Past failures to act on a long-term surface transportation bill have undermined our nation, placing a burden on our economy by impeding growth, delaying the movement of people and goods, and hurting working people. Fixing this morass, depends on our political leaders to make difficult political decisions.

We applaud Committee leaders for putting aside partisan differences to report out this bill. We urge you to vote yes during markup. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me directly or TTD Legislative Representative Jeff Pavlak at 202/628-9262.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward Wytkind". The signature is fluid and somewhat abstract, with several loops and overlapping lines.

Edward Wytkind
President