



A bold voice for transportation workers

February 2, 2012

***Reject Federal Transit Privatization Mandates
Support Amendment #64***

Dear Representative:

As the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee continues to consider H.R. 7, I urge you to support amendment #64 offered by Rep. Peter DeFazio that would remove heavy-handed transit privatization mandates included in the bill. As drafted, H.R. 7 would cast aside decades of bipartisan policy that has left privatization decisions to local transit authorities and only serve to enrich foreign-based transit companies looking to exploit the U.S. market.

The privatization provisions in H.R. 7 are as far-reaching as they are damaging. One provision declares that transit agencies could only maximize their federal share of funding if they agree to privatize major portions of their operations, giving private companies a federally subsidized advantage over public services. It also eliminates the use of “local policies, criteria, and decision making” when making a determination regarding private sector participation in public transportation. The Department of Transportation (DOT) would be required to offer technical assistance to transit operators on best practices for utilizing private providers and teaching federal grant recipients about the laws and regulations that impact private providers. It also requires the DOT Secretary to publish guidance documenting whether recipients of federal funding fully comply with efforts to increase private sector participation. Additionally, this bill provides private companies the opportunity to receive federal funds directly from FTA.

Taken alone, each of these provisions would be a shocking departure from federal transit policy. Combined in one bill, however, they represent a radical reorientation in public transportation in this country, and a thinly veiled giveaway to foreign transportation companies. Rep. DeFazio’s amendment would strike these damaging privatization provisions and help ensure that our federal transit policy serves the public interest over foreign profits.

For these reasons, I urge you to vote for DeFazio amendment #64 and preserve a strong public transportation system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Wytkind', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Edward Wytkind
President

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