



A bold voice for transportation workers

March 8, 2012

Dear Senator:

The Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD) strongly supports passage of a surface transportation reauthorization (S. 1813) that will put millions of Americans to work building, operating and modernizing our nation's transit systems, rail network, highways and bridges. Today, the Senate will begin to consider dozens of amendments, many of them unrelated to transportation.

As this process moves ahead, I urge you to reject amendments that undermine our transportation system. Conversely, several amendments are being offered which would save and create thousands of jobs around the country, which I hope that you will support.

Oppose #2	Baucus amendment on rural schools
Support #16	Brown-Merkely amendment strengthening Buy America
Oppose #19	Portman-Coburn amendment allowing state opt-out of highway programs
Support #22	Shaheen amendment providing flexibility to small bus systems

OPPOSE #2. Mr. Baucus.

This amendment would use federal and postal employee retirement to fund surface transportation programs. Federal workers' pensions should not be used to fund America's transportation system. Additionally, this would set a bad precedent in the continuing struggle to find future funding sources for this and other programs. Transportation labor has no opinion on the merits of the rural school policy issues addressed in the amendment, but is opposed entirely because of the use of federal and postal pensions.

SUPPORT #16. Mr. Brown (OH) and Mr. Merkley. SA 1819.

The Brown-Merkley Amendment #1819 would close loopholes and increase the transparency of Buy America laws. Strong Buy America requirements are critical to ensuring that federal investments in our transportation infrastructure are leveraged to achieve the greatest possible economic impact and job growth. Brown-Merkley would bring needed transparency to Buy America laws by requiring federal agencies to post any proposed waiver online and provide the

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American public an opportunity to comment prior to taking effect. Agencies would also be required to publish annual reports which include justifications for waivers and the monetary value of the waivers issued. This would build on and codify successful policies already in place at FHWA and apply them to other DOT agencies, creating a more accountable waiver process and help identify areas where we can strengthen our domestic manufacturing sector.

OPPOSE #19. Mr. Portman (for himself and Mr. Coburn). SA 1736.

The amendment would allow states to opt-out of federal program relating to transit and highways, including those under SAFETEA-LU. This is a direct attack on the national transportation network and economy which would balkanize our transportation system. Additionally, this amendment could allow states to avoid important federal requirements that protect workers.

SUPPORT #22. Ms. Shaheen. SA 1678.

The amendment would provide additional budgetary flexibility to transit systems that operate fewer than 50 buses. As a result of budgetary constraints caused by the economic downturn, over 80 percent of public transportation systems have been forced to cut back service, lay off workers or raise fares. The Shaheen amendment would grant small bus systems the flexibility to utilize certain federal transit funds to pay for operating expenses, such as fuel.

TTD is eager to support a strong, bipartisan surface transportation reauthorization. Barring the adoption of amendments which would undermine effective transportation policy or job creation, we urge you to vote for passage of S. 1813.

Sincerely,



Edward Wytkind
President