



A bold voice for transportation workers

March 29, 2012

Vote No on the Republican Budget Resolution

Dear Representative:

Later today, the House of Representatives will vote on a resolution proposed by Budget Committee Chairman Paul Ryan establishing the budget for Fiscal Year 2013 (H. Con. Res. 112). I urge you to oppose this resolution as it would deal a devastating blow to our transportation system and its workers.

This Republican budget plan doubles down on last year's failed effort. Rather than being a "Path to Prosperity" as advertised, it is a road to ruin for our nation's transportation system. It is a recipe for massive job loss, reflects a total disregard for the needs of Americans who continue to suffer under high unemployment, and destroys any hope that the nation will finally address the well documented deterioration of our transportation system and infrastructure.

In addition to the devastating effects of the Republican Budget Resolution on the economy, jobs, and vital services needed by the middle-class, the working poor, and our seniors, the reckless cuts proposed to transportation must be rejected. These transportation cuts are especially irresponsible given the demonstrated ability of transportation investments to promote economic growth, increase productivity for our businesses and workers, enhance America's competitiveness in the global economy, and create and sustain millions of good jobs.

The budget proposes cutting \$31.5 billion in transportation spending in FY2013, which if enacted would cause staggering job losses numbering well over half a million. This shortsighted approach comes at a time when the nation's leading engineers give our transportation infrastructure a D grade and more transportation workers need to be on the job. These cuts also fail to acknowledge that future private-sector economic growth depends on robust public-sector investment in transportation.

While the Budget Resolution does not disclose the specific program cuts that would follow the enactment of this misguided spending plan, the Committee Report accompanying the bill offers stark and disturbing "policy options" that are contemplated to meet these funding cuts. For example, the Budget Committee calls for eliminating funding for high-speed rail projects and any new intercity rail initiatives unless they are established as self-supporting "commercial services." This policy suggestion ignores the reality that passenger rail, like other segments of our transportation system, requires public support and investment and must be seen as providing a service to our businesses and citizens as opposed to turning a profit for Wall Street investors.

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



The Budget Report also calls for terminating funding for the New Starts and Small Starts transit programs on the basis that the benefits of these programs are local and not national and should therefore be funded by states and local jurisdictions exclusively. Never mind the fact that state and local governments can ill-afford to absorb the costs of new transit development that passengers are calling for, but the rationale offered by the Budget Committee completely undercuts the concept of an interconnected, multi-modal national transportation system.

We are also opposed to the proposal to raise aviation security fees on passengers. This approach once again fails to acknowledge that security in the skies is a national priority that should be supported by the federal government.

The proposal to conform Railroad Retirement Tier 1 benefits to Social Security benefits would go back on a decade-old bipartisan, balanced deal supported by rail labor and management. While this provision is backed by questionable assertions regarding savings, what is clear is that this ill-conceived change would harm railroad workers and retirees. That is why rail carriers and unions oppose this measure.

Our transportation system and its employees serve as the backbone of our nation's economy and are critical to its continued recovery. On behalf of transportation labor, I urge you to oppose severe cuts to investments in our transportation system by voting against the Republican Budget Resolution.

Sincerely,

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

Edward Wytkind
President