



A bold voice for transportation workers

July 15, 2014

Dear Representative:

While we are pleased that the House is moving to avoid an immediate default of the Highway Trust Fund, we are extremely disappointed that the bill being considered today (H.R. 5021) is crafted in a way that will make it more likely that Congress will not consider a longer-term surface transportation bill. We find this decision difficult to understand and one that represents an abdication of responsibility to meet our nation's most basic transportation needs, sustain economic growth, and create and maintain jobs in this still fragile economy. By extending the Highway Trust Fund to next May, this "kick the can down the road" proposal will likely result in a series of short-term extensions that undermine the ability of states to invest in transportation projects, increase business uncertainty, and impede job creation.

During the Rules Committee's consideration of H.R. 5021, Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) offered an amendment that would have reduced the cost and duration of the legislation, sustaining the Highway Trust Fund through the calendar year. This would keep the Trust Fund solvent, allow the federal government to fulfill its commitments to reimburse states for transportation needs, and, importantly, give Congress the opportunity to finish a long-term, bipartisan reauthorization bill during this legislative session. Regrettably, the amendment was not allowed. We strongly support Rep. Blumenauer's efforts and believe that House and Senate negotiators should craft a Highway Trust Fund extension that follows this course.

Across this nation, transit systems are cutting service and laying off workers despite record demand, highways are crumbling, and too many bridges are structurally deficient and falling down. This is no accident. For decades, Congress has failed to adequately invest in transportation, undermining economic growth and leaving trillions of dollars in long-overdue transportation projects in waiting. And yet, Congress appears ready to continue this trend with this bill. The tough decisions on financing and policy are not a mystery, and putting them off until the next Congress will not summon new wisdom. To the contrary, further delay will only maintain the status quo: keeping workers off the job, undercutting long-term planning and hindering the country's advance to a 21st century transportation system.

We urge the House to return after the August recess to do its job and complete a surface transportation bill. Waiting until the next deadline or crisis is irresponsible and will only further erode our decaying transportation network and idling millions of jobs.

Sincerely,

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

Edward Wytkind
President

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

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