



A bold voice for transportation workers

May 19, 2015

Support Short-Term Extension of Highway/Transit Programs, Move on Long-Term Bill

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I write to express support for the Highway and Transportation Funding Act of 2015 (H.R. 2353), which would provide a short-term extension for our federal highway and transit funding programs. When it became clear that Congress, 10 months removed from the last extension, would be unable to pass a multi-year reauthorization, TTD called for a short-term extension through July only – an approach focused on keeping pressure on policy leaders to move a longer term bill. While we are pleased that H.R. 2353 follows this path, it is essential that Congress uses this time to craft a long-term reauthorization bill that would expand and modernize our failing surface transportation system and create millions of jobs.

Consideration of H.R. 2353 should not serve as a moment of self-congratulation or as simply a step to yet another extension. It should be a wakeup call. After years of short-sighted policymaking, including 30 extensions of surface transportation programs since 2009, our nation's transportation infrastructure is in complete disarray. The cumulative impact of this disinvestment places the nation on a potentially irreversible course of decline. As transit systems fail to meet basic service demands, roads crumble, bridges collapse, and freight networks are strangled by constant gridlock, failure by Congress to adequately invest in our surface transportation network will undermine America's competitiveness and slow-down an already anemic recovery.

While passing a long-term reauthorization bill presents a difficult challenge, the financial cushion provided by the Highway Trust Fund, which remains solvent into August, provides a perfect opportunity to move on a reauthorization now. Putting off the tough decisions on financing and policy, or waiting for the alignment of intangible political dynamics, will not suddenly inspire movement on a long-term bill that increases investment. To the contrary, further inaction will only ensure another cycle of patchwork extensions that will doom Americans to a badly aged transportation system that can no longer support the needs of a dynamic 21st century economy.

We urge you to vote yes on this extension and then turn your attention to crafting a bipartisan solution that meets the long-term needs of our transit and highway network and boosts middle class job creation. There is no more room for delay. Please contact me directly or TTD Legislative Representative Jeff Pavlak at 202/628-9262 if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

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

Edward Wytkind
President

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

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