



Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

April 26, 2023

## **Oppose H.R. 2811 Limit, Save, Grow Act of 2023**

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), and the millions of transportation workers that we represent, I urge you to oppose the Limit, Save, Grow Act of 2023 (H.R. 2811) when it is put to a vote in the House this week. Speaker McCarthy's proposal would place irresponsible preconditions on raising the nation's debt limit by forcing through cuts to federal funding that would be devastating to transportation safety, workers, and the strength of our economy.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) [reported last month](#) that rolling back funding to FY22 levels—presumably a 22% cut—would undermine transportation safety for years to come due to the layoffs and furloughing of essential safety personnel like air traffic controllers and rail safety inspectors. For example, the Federal Aviation Administration would need to implement an immediate hiring freeze for its operations and safety workforce, and potentially also lay off staff, which would substantially delay certification of aircraft and pilots, and throw a wrench in air traffic control operations. Unnecessary hiring disruptions are a risk to the safety and efficiency of the National Airspace System similar to the devastating impacts of FAA sequestration cuts in 2013. Not to mention that the modernization of critical safety systems in the aviation sector would be abandoned. Moreover, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [reported](#) that such funding limits would necessitate understaffing at the Transportation Security Administration, which would result in increased wait times for airline passengers and decreased security at airports. TSA already anticipates a record number of travelers to pass through American airports this summer and any funding cuts will lead to a less safe and less productive domestic aviation industry.

At a time following the devastating rail derailment in East Palestine, Ohio when the public is painfully aware of the need for increased safety in our freight rail system, not less, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) estimates that such cuts would force FRA to lay off at least 175 personnel, including more than 75 federal railroad safety inspectors. Cutting federal rail safety inspectors would only put communities and workers further at risk of increased rail derailments. Additionally, these cuts would diminish the resources FRA can devote to the Confidential Close Call Reporting System, which would counteract recent efforts to strengthen rail safety by increasing participation across railroads and their employees to identify close safety calls before derailments actually happen. Without robust use of this system, railroad workers have no way to report close call incidents with true anonymity and without fear of retribution from the railroads. Transparency and communication about near-misses and other concerning incidents across the railroad industry equips all parties with greater knowledge that will only enhance decision-making and potentially prevent future safety catastrophes. There is a clear bipartisan drive in Congress to strengthen safety across our nation's railroads. Enacting such deep funding cuts would be beyond counteractive and take us backwards on safety.

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Greg Regan, President / Shari Semelsberger, Secretary-Treasurer



These cuts would represent a significant rolling back of our country's investments in upgrading and expanding our transportation infrastructure. A reduction of this magnitude for example would hamstring Amtrak in starting new service and expanding existing service while preventing critical infrastructure upgrades across the National Network and Northeast Corridor necessary to achieve a state of good repair for our passenger rail infrastructure. At the Federal Transit Administration, a funding cut to the tune of over \$500 million would yank resources from capital projects that are already under construction, and delay or abandon other major capital projects that have already been planned. This bill would also rescind funds set aside to support transit systems that have never fully recovered since the pandemic. This proposal would undermine the infrastructure investments in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) that communities in every state of the country are currently benefiting from and potentially put tens of thousands of workers out of work.

This proposal would also undermine Congress's attempt to develop the skilled workforce needed to follow through on the bipartisan commitment to rebuilding our transportation infrastructure. That skilled workforce cannot be achieved if the Department of Labor's workforce development & training programs and registered apprenticeships [are gutted](#). Additionally, without well-funded enforcement mechanisms built into the Wage and Hour Division and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, it will be harder to attract new workers because of concerns about worker safety if DOL and OSHA are unable to enforce fundamental labor and worker safety laws. That would be very counterproductive when we are trying get workers to consider new careers in the building, operating, and maintaining of infrastructure.

Holding the full faith and credit of the U.S. government hostage to arbitrarily slash investments that improve safety, create good jobs in the transportation workforce, and improve the quality of life for your constituents back home is no way to govern. TTD urges you to oppose this bill and to act immediately to prevent a default by supporting a clean increase.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Regan', with a circular flourish at the end.

Greg Regan, President