Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO
America's Transportation Unions

November 4, 2026

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Collins, Vice Chair Murray, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I raise concerns about various provisions in H.R. 9170, the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2027, and H.R. 9260, Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2027. I respectfully urge you to address these concerns when your Committees set funding priorities ahead of the December 11, 2026 deadline.

As you know, your Committees took a significant step in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) by providing advance appropriations for a host of highway, transit, bridge, intermodal freight, airport, rail, and port programs that require reliable federal support. This stability was especially consequential for modes that otherwise lack a reliable funding source. For every mode, multi-year certainty gives state and local agencies, engineering firms, contractors, suppliers, and operators the ability to plan and deliver projects more efficiently, reduce costs, and maintain skilled, stable workforces. It also gives private-sector partners the confidence to invest in materials, equipment, facilities, and employees — knowing that federal funding will remain available throughout the lifecycle of major projects.

TTD continues advocating alongside dozens of other labor, industry, and government associations in urging Congress to extend IIJA advance appropriations that have been delivering

tens of thousands of transportation and infrastructure projects and supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs in your districts and states and across the country. We urge the Committees to find a path forward on providing advance appropriations for modes that received such funds under IIJA, so American workers can continue to build, maintain, and operate transportation systems and infrastructure that allow our national, state, and local economies to flourish.

As we urge Congress to find a path to extending advance appropriations for FY 2027, we also urge your Committees to reverse the cuts proposed in H.R. 9170 that would substantially reduce or gut investments for several transportation programs:

- The bill would cut Amtrak's National Network and Northeast Corridor levels by 69% below the level Congress appropriated Amtrak in FY 2026 (annual and advance appropriations), and 76% below IIJA FY 2026 levels (authorized and advance appropriations). It also represents a 13.5% cut from the annual appropriations your Committees appropriated for Amtrak in FY 2026. We oppose these cuts and urge you to reverse H.R. 9170's proposed cuts, which do not reflect the desires of the American people. Amtrak ridership and revenue are at record levels, and ridership on new Amtrak services in the Midwest, *Borealis,* and the restored service on the Gulf Coast, *Mardi Gras Service,* are surpassing expectations. While Amtrak reached record ridership last year, record revenues cannot substitute for, or excuse, failing to build on these successes and continued strong federal investment in Amtrak. Amtrak continues to play a key role in offering intercity service to rural communities where such service is otherwise limited or absent, while expanding its services to new cities and rural communities. These funding cuts would not just undermine these services, but would also have a disproportionate impact on Amtrak's nearly 22,000 union employees who make the railroad run, as well as countless others who are at work on construction sites and in American manufacturing facilities, making improvements and producing rolling stock that will benefit Amtrak passengers for generations to come. The investments in Amtrak are multifold, yielding $5 for every $1 invested in economic activity.
- The bill zeros out the Ferry Service to Rural Communities Program and the Low-Emitting Ferry Program. This would hinder the frequency and reliability of ferry service, as well as any upgrades to vessels and related infrastructure. Communities rely on ferries for transportation to employment, schools, and medical facilities, and funding cuts to these programs would negatively impact local tourism and small businesses.
- The bill would cut FTA's Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program from FY 2026 annual funding by more than 57%, or a 77% cut when considering the advance appropriations the program received in FY 2026. This proposed cut to CIG would severely limit funding that supports projects to expand commuter rail, light rail, subways, bus rapid transit, and ferries.
- The bill would also fail to fund the Maritime Security Program (MSP) at its authorized level of $400.5 million. Full funding of this Program ensures the United States will have

the militarily-useful U.S.-flag commercial vessels and their U.S. citizen crews needed to support American troops deployed throughout the world and to otherwise meet the needs of the Department of War whenever and wherever necessary.

- The bill would zero-out the Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Program (FSP). Just weeks ago, Secretary Duffy announced a "Golden Age of Rail" when awarding FSP grants to "enhance safety, upgrade critical infrastructure, and purchase new trainsets for Amtrak..." These grants will support projects across 23 States, including projects in Maine and Washington, as well as an Amtrak rolling stock procurement that will serve the Hartford Line, Cascades, Empire Service, and many others. The $5 billion in awards accounted for only about 40% of the applications the FRA received, yet, H.R. 9170 would cancel the program's funding. FSP funding also supports corridor development through the Corridor ID Program, such as the I-20 Corridor, Heartland Flyer Extension, and Big Sky. Without renewed FSP funding, the future of Corridor ID Program projects could be jeopardized and freight railroad projects seeking CRISI grants will likely face increased competition from intercity passenger rail capital projects seeking funding under CRISI rather than FSP.
- The bill fails to fund the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) program, which makes investments in America's domestic supply chain and the workers who install these systems. We encourage the committee to support this workforce by continuing funding for NEVI.

In addition to the funding levels described above, we oppose section 155 of H.R. 9170 that proposes statutory changes to the Railroad Crossing Elimination (RCE) grant program and similar text under the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements grant program header, which would not require that funding awarded under either program for commuter rail projects to be transferred to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and administered in accordance with that agency's statute. This is not simply a change in which agency processes a grant; it has real impacts on employees whose work may be affected by an RCE or CRISI grant. Because commuter rail projects have historically not been eligible for Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) competitive programs, critical FRA program railroad worker protections do not apply to such projects funded by CRISI, and only limited protections apply to RCE-funded commuter projects. If the language included in H.R. 9170 were applied, commuter rail workers would be affected twice: they would have only limited or no statutory coverage under grant conditions that protect railroad workers when FRA grants are involved, and they would lose access to worker protections that would apply if funds are transferred to FTA and administered under chapter 53. Separately, we have concerns that the bill makes holding companies of Class II and Class III railroads eligible for CRISI grants, which contradicts the authorizing statute. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee rejected an amendment seeking to make this policy change during a markup of the BUILD America 250 Act earlier this year, and we urge you to do the same.

TTD strongly supports additional investment to modernize our aging air traffic control system, and we greatly appreciate your work to increase funding for the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Facilities and Equipment (F&E) account in recently enacted appropriations bills. Despite this progress and the $12.5 billion "down payment" Congress provided to the FAA last year, more resources will be necessary to upgrade critical infrastructure and facilities, invest in new technology, and ensure full staffing to ensure the National Airspace System (NAS) remains the safest and most advanced in the world.

We urge House and Senate appropriators to continue to increase funding for the FAA's F&E account as part of the annual appropriations process and to provide additional resources as part of the annual appropriations process and other available avenues, should the opportunity arise, prioritizing core infrastructure and technology improvements that will enhance safety and efficiency, including:

- Common Automation Platform (CAP): Currently, controllers must rely on different automation surveillance platforms depending on the airspace, and the FAA has spent hundreds of millions for required "refreshes" of these foundational yet aging systems that were developed decades ago. Replacing the FAA's current en route, terminal, and oceanic procedures automation systems used to separate and sequence aircraft into a single modern platform would allow controllers to more safely and efficiently manage air traffic, reduce training costs and increase operational flexibility, and result in major benefits for the NAS. Current estimates suggest approximately $10 billion is required to bring CAP to fruition.
- Surface Safety and Collision Avoidance: TTD supports mandatory equipage of commercial aircraft with safety-enhancing alerting technologies, including integrated ADS-B In systems in the flight deck and the Surface Situational Awareness with Indications and Alerts (SURF-IA) system to provide situational awareness for pilots in the terminal and runway environments. The FAA can maximize the safety benefits of these technologies by accelerating and expanding the current Surface Awareness Initiative (SAI) that is deploying to some airports that lack legacy ASDE-X and ASSC systems. SAI uses commercial "off-the-shelf" tools to give controllers a real-time picture of both aircraft and ground vehicle locations, providing alerts about potential conflicts or runway incursions. The March 22nd tragedy at LaGuardia also underscores the need for widespread mandatory deployment of Vehicle Movement Area Transmitters (VMATs) for all ground vehicles that operate in the airport "movement area."
- Facilities and Infrastructure: The FAA has begun to address some needs at aging ATC facilities, as well as replacing core infrastructure such as copper wiring, aging analog voice switches, and outdated radar systems. However, we expect additional resources will

be required to comprehensively address these problems, especially the longstanding, multi-decade backlog of ATC facility maintenance, repair, and replacement.

It should be noted that the FAA's prior track record of implementing new technology reveals these initiatives are only successful when they directly involve the frontline aviation workforce. The "end users" of any new technology, whether it is pilots, controllers, technicians, or dispatchers, must be consulted and involved during development, testing, and implementation to ensure the programs work as intended, improve safety and efficiency, and are delivered to the flying public on time and on budget.

In addition to our concerns with the House FY 2027 THUD bill, we urge the committee to address funding levels for two agencies in the FY 2027 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education bill that provide essential services to railroad and airline workers:

- We urge you to provide at least $17.113 million, an increase of $2 million over the FY 2026 enacted level and House FY 2027 bill, to help fund the National Mediation Board (NMB or Board). The Board is no longer functioning as intended by the governing statute – the Railway Labor Act –to promote industry stability through collective bargaining. As you know, the overall NMB budget has been flat at $15.113 million since FY 2023 and increased by less than $2 million overall dating back to FY 12. As a consequence, several challenges have emerged from insufficient staffing and staffing resources. We respectfully request that the subcommittee's FY 2027 bill provide the NMB with funding and staff sufficient to ensure the Board can ensure the nation's aviation and railroad industries can continue to move passengers and deliver freight as envisioned by the Railway Labor Act.
- We also urge the Committee to provide $185 million for the Railroad Retirement Board's (RRB) Limitation on Administration (LOA), consistent with the agency's request for FY 2027. The House bill proposes just $126 million, a $1 million cut from the currently enacted FY 2026 levels. Chronic underfunding has created operational challenges, including claim backlogs, staffing shortages, and aging technology used to administer benefits that over half a million railroad workers have paid into and earned throughout their careers. We encourage the Committee to also support reforms that would provide greater stability and predictability in the RRB's administrative funding while maintaining appropriate oversight.

We urge your Committees to address our concerns in the House Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development and the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education Appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2027 and to meet the moment and find a path to provide advance appropriations. Congress should continue making strong investments that strengthen our transportation networks and bolster the workers whose careers are dedicated to building, operating, and maintaining these networks.

Respectfully,

Greg Regan



President
Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO