

March 7, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman
Senate Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Price
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Cochran, Rogers, Collins and Diaz-Balart and Ranking Members Mikulski, Lowey, Reed and Price:

As you prepare the Transportation-HUD appropriations bill for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, we write to respectfully request that the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program is funded at or above the FY2016 level of \$500 million and that the Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment Grants program is funded at the FAST Act authorization level of \$2.3 billion.

Local and regional governments generate nearly three-quarters of U.S. gross domestic product, represent two-thirds of the nation's population, and account for 95 percent of all public transportation passenger miles traveled. Yet, our local jurisdictions receive less than 10% of the federal highway program's funding. The incredibly popular TIGER grant program is one of the only ways that local communities can apply directly for and secure funds from the federal government for priority transportation projects. The TIGER competition spurs innovation, leverages federal funding far greater than what's available through formula programs, and awards funding to projects that provide a high-return on investment.

Year after year, the demand for TIGER far exceeds the amount of funding available. In 2015, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) received 627 applications requesting more than \$10.1 billion in funding, which was 20 times the amount available. Since its creation in 2009, TIGER has made critical investments in multimodal projects in every state in the nation, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Likewise, the transit Capital Investment Grants program (i.e. New Starts, Small Starts, Core Capacity) is the federal government's primary resource for supporting locally-planned, major transit capital investments. The program has facilitated the creation of new or extended public transportation systems across the country.

Under this program, FTA awards grants on a competitive basis for large projects that cannot traditionally be funded from a transit agency's annual formula funds, such as new fixed guideway systems, including heavy rail (subway), light rail, streetcars, or bus rapid transit. Projects are encouraged to leverage public-private-partnerships. Recognizing the importance of this program, Congress increased its authorization by \$400 million in FY2016 in the FAST Act.

Both the TIGER and Capital Investment Grants programs complement DOT's traditional formula-based programs. Both programs provide unique, cost-effective, and innovative solutions that leverage private, state, and local investment to solve complex transportation opportunities and spur economic development.

Thank you for considering these critical programs, which invest in our nation's infrastructure, create jobs for American workers, and boost our regional economies.

Sincerely,

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