



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

*The Voice For Real Estate®*

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June 26, 2008

Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure  
Subcommittee on Highways & Transit  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the more than 1.2 million members of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), I wish to commend the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit for holding a hearing on "Connecting Communities: The Role of the Surface Transportation Network in Moving People and Freight." REALTORS® appreciate the need for an integrated surface transportation system that makes essential connections among all types of real estate in all types of communities. REALTORS® know that the health and prosperity of American communities depends on efficient movement of people and goods.

With the expiration of the current transportation authorization next year, the Subcommittee will be examining a host of issues, including some that have risen in prominence only recently. With this in mind, NAR appointed a working group to re-examine our policy on transportation. The group's recommendations were recently adopted by our board of directors (attached). In brief, our policy advocates that the federal government increase its investment in transportation infrastructure but in a way that addresses the needs of all types of individuals (disabled, aged, children, etc.) and all types of communities (rural, urban, and suburban).

The rising price of fuel, concerns about climate change, and the looming crisis of the Highway Trust Fund are just a few of the significant issues that must be addressed in the next transportation authorization. In meeting this challenge we encourage you to think broadly, to be open to new approaches, and to seek advice from varied sources. If the National Association of REALTORS® can assist in any way, please let me know.

Sincerely,

Richard F. Gaylord, CIPS, CRB, CRS, GRI  
2008 President, National Association of REALTORS®

Attachment: 2008 NAR Transportation Policy

## **National Association of REALTORS®**

### **Official Policy on Transportation**

**Adopted 5-17-08**

The timely provision of safe, convenient and efficient transportation infrastructure enhances the quality of communities, supports property values, and mitigates the effects of traffic congestion that accompany growth. REALTORS® support improving mobility in communities so that all citizens have access to transportation means best suited to their needs. Changing travel patterns, shrinking petroleum supplies, and continuing technological innovation will challenge traditional means of transportation planning, construction and funding. With these challenges in mind, NAR urges the federal government to incorporate the following principles in future transportation authorization legislation.

1. Federal spending for transportation infrastructure should be sufficient to maintain the current physical condition and level of performance of highways and transit systems and to make improvements to reduce congestion and to foster economic development. To finance increased transportation spending, NAR supports both a modest increase in the federal transportation user charge tax rate and indexing the tax rate to account for inflation. In addition, the federal government should explore a variety of means to ensure a reliable stream of revenue for transportation funding so that revenues grow in step with increasing travel demand.
2. High occupancy toll lanes should be permitted on roads financed with federal assistance. All tolls collected on such lanes should be dedicated to transportation purposes in the same community in which they are collected.
3. Taxes levied on transportation users should be deposited in a trust account for spending exclusively on transportation purposes.
4. Interest on balances in the Highway Trust Fund should accrue to the Fund and be spent exclusively for transportation purposes.
5. States should have a large measure of flexibility in determining how Highway Trust Fund monies are spent within their borders.
6. Highway Trust Fund revenues should continue to be used for projects designed to mitigate air pollution by reducing travel demand.
7. The federal share of funding for new transit capital projects should remain on a par with the federal share of funding for highway projects.
8. Transportation planning and implementation should be fully integrated into a comprehensive community planning effort, coordinated with state and metropolitan planning processes, using substantial citizen involvement and civic leadership to achieve the consensus vision of the community.
9. The federal transportation funding bill should provide a predictable level of funding that avoids large changes from one year to the next.
10. All federal taxes levied on any fuel or alternative energy source used for surface transportation should be deposited in the Highway Trust Fund.

11. The time required for environmental review of transportation projects should be significantly reduced without compromising environmental protection.

12. Federal Surface Transportation Programs for states should be structured so that:

- State and local transportation planning is not biased in favor of one mode or another because of differences in federal program requirements.
- Proportionately more funds are available in parts of a state with greater transportation needs.
- Emphasis is placed on providing seamless connections between transportation modes.
- Priority in spending is given to maintaining the integrity and performance of existing investments in national transportation infrastructure.

13. Transportation improvement planning should consider the needs of all transportation users along a transportation corridor and provisions should be made to accommodate a variety of users in transportation projects, where possible.