



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®

The Voice For Real Estate®

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March 31, 2010

The Honorable Barbara Boxer, Chair
United States Senate Committee on Environment
and Public Works
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Inhofe, Ranking Member
United States Senate Committee on Environment
and Public Works
453 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Boxer and Inhofe,

On behalf of the 1.2 million members of the National Association of REALTORS®, I am writing to thank you for your leadership in holding hearings recently concerning the reauthorization of the nation's transportation funding legislation. In the 1950s, Congress and the Eisenhower administration undertook to implement the bold vision of an Interstate Highway System and today we can take justifiable pride in that accomplishment. But the time has come to focus on adjusting our transportation programs to address the needs of the present century while preserving the integrity of the infrastructure we have inherited from the last.

As real estate professionals, we go to work every day in America's communities. We see what is working and what isn't. We hear what our clients tell us about the kinds of communities they want to live in. They want communities where their precious time is not wasted in traffic congestion. They want streets that are safe for themselves and their loved ones. They do not want to be dependent on a single mode of travel. They want more choices. They understand how important good transportation is to their quality of life.

For these reasons we urge you to consider the following principles as you undertake in the coming months to craft a new transportation bill for the 21st century.

A Seamless Network: We are a diverse nation with diverse transportation needs. This will require us to develop many modes planned so that travelers can move from one mode to another seamlessly and efficiently. Federal programs need to discourage single-mode transportation planning and encourage a multi-modal approach.

A Defined Mission and Measurable Performance: With completion of the Interstate System, Congress must define a new mission for federal transportation efforts in terms of specific and measurable objectives. In order to sustain significant investments in transportation infrastructure, the public will expect accountability and benchmarks for performance.

Fix it First: Assuring the continued integrity and performance of existing investments in national transportation infrastructure should take precedence over investment in expansion of capacity.

A Balanced Transportation System: In order to build a balanced multi-modal transportation system that provides flexibility and choice, more emphasis needs to be placed on public transportation and on non-motorized modes than has been the case in the past. Transportation planning should not be biased in favor of one mode or another because of differences in federal program requirements. To achieve balance, public transportation should be eligible for at least one-third of formula funds and allowed to compete for flexible funds on the same terms as other modes.

Local Leadership: Transportation planning and implementation should be fully integrated into a comprehensive planning effort, coordinated with state and metropolitan planning processes, using substantial citizen involvement and civic leadership to achieve the consensus vision of the community.

Complete Streets: The National Association of REALTORS® supports the Complete Streets concept and believes that 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.

Sustainable Financing: Changing travel patterns, shrinking petroleum supplies, and continuing technological innovation will challenge traditional means of transportation planning, construction and funding. 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.

As the American economy grows and evolves, our transportation system must grow and evolve with it. We can be prosperous and competitive and achieve full employment sooner with a modern and flexible transportation infrastructure that supports economic growth. You have our best wishes as you take up this challenge and we look forward to a successful outcome.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vicki Cox Golder". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vicki Cox Golder, CRB
2010 President, National Association of REALTORS®