Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 6, 2011

President Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We are writing to respectfully urge your full support for a long-term transportation reauthorization. Such legislation will address our urgent transportation and infrastructure needs, create jobs for Americans and give the private sector important incentives to locate, invest and hire here in the United States.

The need for a long-term transportation authorization is clear to any American who drives a car or truck, rides the rails or flies in an airplane. First, our aging infrastructure risks creating a safety hazard for Americans. The American Society for Civil Engineers (ASCE) gives our transportation infrastructure a grade of "D," and a recent federal report estimated that more than 11 percent of the nation's bridges need timely repairs to avoid unsafe structural deficiencies.

Second, transportation backlogs increase costs for small businesses and hurt job creation and economic growth. The ASCE reports that the cost of failing to invest in the nation's roads and bridges would total $2.1 trillion in lost economic growth by 2020, costing 877,000 jobs. The ASCE went on to find that congestion by 2020 could cost us $276 billion a year in lost time and inefficiencies. As a result of using more fuel, lost productivity and accelerated auto-wear on worsening roads, the overall cost to a family's household budget would be $1,060 a year.

To address these urgent economic, transportation and safety needs, we believe our country needs a six-year, fully funded and paid-for transportation reauthorization with investments above current funding. Short-term extensions fail to recognize that meaningful, large-scale transportation projects take years to plan, approve and implement. The traditional six-year time-frame allows state departments of transportation to prepare for substantial infrastructure projects.

A modern, safe and efficient transportation authorization will not only create jobs now for the construction industry – facing a 13.3 percent unemployment rate – but it will also set the table for long-term job creation and economic growth. Global employers considering a presence in the United States will require a modern transportation infrastructure that enables them to move their finished products to the global market place in a timely and cost-efficient manner. Our aging and congested system is a strong disincentive for firms to expand their presence in the United States and create jobs here at home. A long-term transportation authorization will help make America more competitive in the global marketplace and create jobs in all sectors of our economy.

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Given our fiscal challenges, we recognize that a six-year transportation authorization will need to be paid-for. We stand willing to work with your Administration on a variety of funding options. We have many ideas, but realize they are just a start and are happy to discuss others with you as well.

Thank you in advance for your help in supporting a long-term transportation reauthorization that will create a modern, safe and efficient infrastructure system and create jobs and promote long-term economic growth. We look forward to working with you further on this issue.

Sincerely,

Aaron Schock
Member of Congress

Jim Cooper
Member of Congress

Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress

John C. Carney, Jr.
Member of Congress

Robert T. Schilling
Member of Congress

Daniel Lipinski
Member of Congress

Glenn Thompson
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Peter A. DeFazio
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Mike Kelly
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Charles F. Bass
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Adam B. Schiff
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Adam Kinzinger
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Louise McIntosh Slaughter
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Charles J. "Chuck" Fleischmann
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Henry Cuellar
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Brett Guthrie
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