

EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE

12:00am ET – March 12, 2020

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METROPOLITAN CIVIC LEADERSHIP ALLIANCE CALLS ON CONGRESS TO REAUTHORIZE, RETHINK TRANSPORTATION FUNDING BILL

The Alliance has outlined a bold, visionary platform for transportation funding that rewards innovative thinking and ensures U.S. regions can compete in today's global economy

(Washington, D.C., March 12, 2020) – United by an ambitious transportation agenda for our country, the Metropolitan Civic Leadership Alliance, a new group of 10 business-led civic organizations representing the nation's leading metropolitan regions, has come together to urge Congress to reauthorize and re-envision the federal transportation funding bill – Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act – set to expire this fall.

Recognizing the vital role transportation plays in driving metropolitan regions' economic success and quality of life, the Alliance sent a letter to Congress outlining a platform for a visionary, forward-leaning transportation package that would reward high-capacity regions with greater funding and flexibility. Two former secretaries of the U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) have endorsed the Alliance's recommendations.

"Reauthorization is an opportunity to fundamentally improve how our nation invests in transportation," said Ray LaHood, former U.S. DOT Secretary, 2009-13. "Metropolitan regions are our nation's economic engines. To remain competitive, they need a strong federal infrastructure investment program."

"We need to build on previous generations' investments in our roads, rail and transit," said Sam Skinner, former U.S. DOT Secretary, 1989-91. "By making federal funding more flexible and targeting it to metropolitan areas, we will be able to leverage innovation and get more out of every dollar spent."

Members of the Metropolitan Civic Leadership Alliance have spearheaded efforts in their regions to adopt innovative financing and congestion reduction programs, advocated for historic transit and rail investments, and supported efforts to more globally connect airports to metropolitan regions. The Alliance has the real-world experience and collective expertise to support Congress' efforts to ensure the FAST Act – which funds road, bridge, transit, rail, walking, cycling and freight improvements – goes beyond the status quo and provides the necessary tools for each region to prosper.

"The prosperity and future success of our region – and in turn the nation's economic success – requires that we invest in a modern, safe and efficient transportation system,"

said Jason Miller, CEO of the Greater Washington Partnership. “As we have learned here in the Capital Region, when we put our collective foot forward, we can achieve transformative outcomes. That is why we are eager to partner with our colleagues around the country to push for a bold, regionally impactful transportation funding bill that invests in the tools, innovation and ideas that we know will make us more globally competitive and improve quality of life.”

“As a global transportation hub, the Chicago region is reliant upon a well-maintained, modern, multimodal transportation network,” said Kelly Welsh, President, Civic Committee of Commercial Club of Chicago. “Congress should provide metropolitan areas like Chicago with both the flexibility and the incentive to maximize every dollar we receive through innovation.”

The coalition is comprised of 10 civic organizations, led by CEOs and top executives of major regional employers that have a mission of making their regions great places to live and work. The organizations—the [Bay Area Council](#), [Civic Committee of Commercial Club of Chicago](#), [Columbus Partnership](#), [Greater Houston Partnership](#), [Greater Washington Partnership](#), [Massachusetts Competitive Partnership](#), [Metro Atlanta Chamber](#), [Partnership for New York City](#), [Silicon Valley Leadership Group](#), and [The Washington Roundtable](#)—represent regions that include nearly 20 percent of the nation’s population and 30 percent of national Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The Alliance’s letter to Congress focused on unlocking metropolitan innovation and better supporting regions’ multimodal, integrated transportation systems. It outlined the following policy and funding solutions for the next transportation bill:

- **Create a fair playing field for funding.** Congress and the U.S. DOT are increasingly limiting competition for grants to less populated states or rural areas. Grant programs should not be off-limits to large metropolitan regions.
- **Strategically focus on major cities and metropolitan regions.** Cities and regions can help achieve national transportation goals—such as congestion reduction, air quality improvement and economic development—in innovative ways when they have the opportunity to access federal funding and financing directly. The federal program should reward cities and metropolitan regions that have the capacity to deliver results with greater funding and programmatic flexibility.
- **Expand the nation’s multimodal freight program.** The coalition strongly supports growing both the formula and competitive grant funding dedicated to national freight network improvements. Freight funds should be fully multimodal, and the program should give greater attention and authority to metropolitan areas, where complex freight problems affect millions of people and businesses.
- **Leverage metropolitan innovation to relieve congestion.** Metropolitan areas are grappling with increasing congestion, yet federal funding and policies are not structured in ways that allow metropolitan regions to address congestion. New formula and competitive programs should be targeted to urban areas to create comprehensive, multimodal transportation

solutions via grant programs that spur and reward innovations that reduce congestion.

- **Better connect economies through intercity rail.** Intercity rail is a vital component of our transportation system. The reauthorization should fund expanded intercity rail service, bring Amtrak's infrastructure to a state of good repair and make improvements. A multi-year passenger rail grant program modeled off the transit program's Capital Investment Grant program should be created to give funding certainty to large long-term rail improvements.
- **Enhance our transit systems.** While the transit needs of metropolitan regions vary widely, all of these systems need a strong federal partner with a larger capital grant program that can speed up the delivery of long-planned transit enhancements and state of good repair investments.
- **Finance airport improvements.** Airport terminals and facilities are key connectors to metropolitan regions' road and transit networks, but they are not eligible for low-interest financing available through the U.S. DOT TIFIA program. Giving airports access to this financing tool will lower the cost of capital for these massive rebuilding projects and allow local areas to reinvest those savings to improve our national aviation network.

"Our metro regions are the nation's major centers of economic activity and innovation," said Kathryn Wylde, President and CEO, Partnership for New York City. "The country depends on us, and we depend on transit infrastructure."

"A strong, vital, state-of-the-art transportation system is a critical element in driving long-term success for our cities and broader metro regions," said Robert L. Reynolds, Chairman, Massachusetts Competitive Partnership, and CEO of Putnam Investments. "Fortifying key aspects of our nation's transportation infrastructure will help position the United States for expanded economic growth, bolster our communities and provide significant quality of life improvement for our citizens. I encourage Congress to act decisively in reauthorizing this important funding bill."

The Metropolitan Alliance for Civic Leadership will continue to promote the urgent need for a bold, visionary federal transportation reauthorization bill through joint activities, as well as individual actions by members in their respective regions.

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