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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6175

BETTINA POIRIER, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
RUTH VAN MARK, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

September 26, 2011

The Honorable Patty Murray
The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
Co-Chairs, Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction

Dear Co-Chairs and Members:

Thank you for your invitation to offer suggestions for your consideration. As you develop your recommendations, we urge you to consider addressing the long-term solvency of the highway trust fund. Given the vital role that a strong infrastructure plays in the U.S. economy and job creation, Congress must, at a minimum, maintain current transportation funding levels.

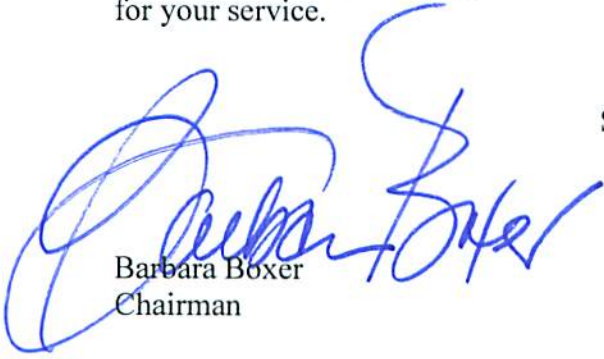
There is strong bi-partisan support for addressing the nation's transportation needs while resolving our debt crisis. The National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, the Bipartisan Policy Center's Debt Reduction Task Force, and the Senate's gang of six all have included provisions in their final recommendations to ensure robust long-term federal spending on transportation.

As Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, we believe it is essential to fund our roads and bridges not only for jobs and businesses, but also because over 70,000 of our bridges are structurally deficient and 50% of our highway miles are in less than "good" condition. Our Committee has a bipartisan highway bill that, if enacted, would dramatically reform the current highway program and would do a great deal to foster short and long-term economic growth and create jobs.

There is tremendous support from businesses, workers, and the American people for a transportation bill that promotes sound economic growth. AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka and U.S. Chamber of Commerce President Thomas Donohue have joined together in calling for quick action on a transportation bill that will create jobs and spur an economic recovery. Recently, CEOs from 20 major companies wrote a letter to the majority and minority leadership in both chambers to urge Congress to pass a well-funded surface transportation reauthorization bill, which would be consistent with funding levels we have called for in our proposed legislation.

Once again, we strongly urge that as you address the nation's fiscal crisis, you do not neglect America's transportation needs and the critical role transportation plays in job creation and our economic recovery. We appreciate the enormous task before the joint committee and thank you for your service.

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
Chairman



James Inhofe
Ranking Member

CC:

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
The Honorable Dave Camp
The Honorable James E. Clyburn
The Honorable Fred Upton
The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
The Honorable Max Baucus
The Honorable Jon Kyl
The Honorable John Kerry
The Honorable Rob Portman
The Honorable Pat Toomey
Members, Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction