



July 14, 2011

The Honorable James Lankford  
509 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Lankford,

We write to encourage your colleagues to co-sponsor and otherwise support your State Highway Flexibility Act, a bill that would allow states to opt out of the Federal-aid Highway Program and Mass Transit Account (MTA) mandates.

After decades of overspending and mismanagement, the Federal Highway Trust Fund has become a leading example of government waste and inefficiency. Rampant earmarking of transportation funds allocates resources to pet projects at the expense of real infrastructure investment. This bill combats these irresponsible spending practices by returning control of transportation funding to the states.

The State Highway Flexibility Act allows state transportation departments to opt out of the Federal-aid Highway program and MTA, collecting the excise tax revenue generated within the state and allow states to direct these funds instead.

Current federal disbursement of funds incentivizes overspending on politically glamorous public transportation projects that leave states on the hook for expensive and underutilized transit programs. What's more, the relationship between federal and state spending on transportation projects has unnecessarily encourages states to increase their costs and number of transportation projects, as excessive spending in the states is rewarded with more federal funds.

States are better in tune with their own transportation needs but have been prevented from spending wisely on transportation by overbroad federal mandates. Reverting control of transportation funding to the states allows local policymakers to prioritize transportation decisions; this will likely lead to savings for taxpayers and greater accountability on how transportation dollars are being spent.

By returning highway and MTA funds to the states, the State Highway Flexibility Act will restrict the profligate spending habits that have so often put the Highway Trust Fund in the red. Thus, we encourage your colleagues to support your State Highway Flexibility Act and look forward to working with you to increase restraint in federal spending.

Sincerely,



Grover Norquist  
President  
Americans for Tax Reform



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