

March 31, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman
Senate Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Price
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Cochran, Frelinghuysen, Collins, and Diaz-Balart and Ranking Members Leahy, Lowey, Reed, and Price:

As you prepare the omnibus Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 appropriations bill and the Transportation-HUD appropriations bill for FY2018, we write to respectfully request that you fund the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program at or above FY16 level of \$500 million and that you fully fund the Transit Capital Investment Grants program at the FAST Act authorization level of \$2.3 billion.

Local and regional governments generate nearly three quarters of U.S. gross domestic product, represent two-thirds of the nation's population, and account for 95 percent of all public transportation passenger miles traveled. Yet, our local jurisdictions receive less than 10% of the federal highway program's funding. The incredibly popular TIGER grant program is one of the only ways that local communities can apply for and secure funds from the federal government for priority transportation projects. The TIGER competition spurs innovation, leverages federal funding far greater than what's available through formula programs, and awards funding to projects that provide a high-return on investment.

Year after year, the demand for TIGER far exceeds the amount of funding available. In 2015, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) received 627 applications requesting more than \$10.1 billion in funding, which was 20 times the amount available. Since its creation in 2009, TIGER has made critical investments in multimodal projects in every state in the nation, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.

Likewise, the transit Capital Investment Grants program (i.e. New Starts, Small Starts, Core Capacity) is the federal government's primary resource for supporting locally-planned, major transit capital investments. The program has facilitated the creation of new or extended public transportation systems across the country.

Under this program, FTA awards grants on a competitive basis for large projects that cannot traditionally be funded from a transit agency's annual formula funds, such as new fixed guideway systems, including heavy rail (subway), light rail, streetcars, or bus rapid transit. Projects are encouraged to leverage public-private-partnerships (P3) to participate in a streamlined grant process. Recognizing the importance of this program, Congress increased its authorization by \$400 million in the FAST Act.

Both the TIGER and Capital Investment Grants programs complement DOT's traditional formula-based programs. Both programs provide unique, cost-effective, and innovative solutions that leverage private, state, and local investment to solve complex transportation opportunities and spur economic development.

While we are writing today about the TIGER and CIG programs in particular, we also want to make clear that these programs should not be paid for by significant cuts in other essential discretionary domestic programs. The Trump administration's budget proposal falls short in prioritizing investment in the local communities that are the basic building block of our national economy. We urge Congress to uphold its promise to the American people and reinvest in our nation's communities.

Thank you for considering these critical programs, which invest in our nation's infrastructure, create jobs for American workers, and boost our regional economies.

Sincerely,

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