

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 18, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Senate Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid,

As you move forward with legislation to create jobs, it is critical that any such legislation include significant investment in transportation infrastructure. We can sustain and create hundreds of thousands of jobs by rebuilding our crumbling roads and bridges, expanding access to mass transit, building a comprehensive high speed rail network, investing in our freight infrastructure, and modernizing our nation's air traffic control system.

Since the recession began, 1.6 million construction jobs have been lost and the unemployment rate for the construction industry has reached nearly 23 percent. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act provided crucial funding for this sector that created and sustained jobs, preventing even higher unemployment in this industry. However, although the funding for transportation infrastructure in the Recovery Act was a good first step, we must do more.

Around the country, transportation projects stand ready to create jobs while repairing and revitalizing our infrastructure—all they need is a funding boost. For example, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials recently released a list of “ready-to-go” highway, transit, rail, port and aviation projects totaling nearly \$80 billion in funding needs. This demand is further demonstrated by the overwhelming interest in the Recovery Act transportation funds. The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) has received over \$59 billion in project applications for the \$1.5 billion TIGER grant program created by the Recovery Act. Similarly, the DOT received approximately \$57 billion in grant applications for the Recovery Act's \$8 billion high-speed rail grant program.

Transportation infrastructure investment is one of the most effective and efficient ways to create good-paying jobs and boost our economy. It helps us remain competitive abroad, become energy independent, and reduce greenhouse gas pollution. We know that the Recovery Act has created or sustained hundreds of thousands transportation-related jobs and we have an opportunity in a new jobs bill to create or sustain even more while truly bringing the American transportation system into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We urge you to make transportation infrastructure investment a top priority in any jobs package debated in the coming weeks.

Thank you for your leadership and your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Laukenberg

Jay Rostyler

John Reed

John F. King

Debbie Starnow

Robert Boyd

Patrick Leahy

Robert Menendez

Mary Landrini

Phil W.

Whitman

Bob Sanders

Kirsten E. Hillibul

Mark Begich

Sally Brown

Jeffrey A. Merkley

Tom Udall

CC: Senator Dick Durbin  
Senator Byron Dorgan