

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6175

November 17, 2009

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
The Capitol, S-221
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
The Capitol, S-230
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell:

One of the best ways to spur job creation and economic recovery is through infrastructure investment. That is why a longer term extension of the surface transportation program is so important to maintaining our nation's vital bridges, roads, public transportation and other related infrastructure, restoring our economy and creating good jobs for American workers.

In July, the Committee on Environment and Public Works, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, and the Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs each reported an 18-month extension of the surface transportation program prior to the expiration of the 2005 surface transportation bill, the Safe Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), with bipartisan support.

We believe a multi-month extension of SAFETEA-LU is the best solution. It would give states the certainty they need to plan and contract for transportation infrastructure projects. The Department of Transportation estimates that every \$1 billion spent on transportation and matched by the states supports approximately 35,000 jobs. It would also give the Department of Transportation's highway safety agencies the certainty they need to continue implementing safety-critical programs that keep motorists safe on our roads.

SAFETEA-LU expired at the end of September and, unfortunately, there was objection to floor consideration of the bipartisan legislation extending these important programs. This necessitated two short term extensions to the surface transportation program, attached to Continuing Resolutions. Short term extensions mean less money is available for states, and do not provide states the certainty they need to keep crucial transportation projects moving forward.

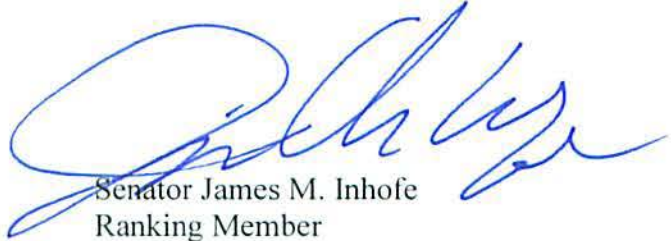
On a bipartisan basis, we have decided to move forward with a 6-month extension. Unfortunately, a small number of Senators continue to object and will not allow an extension to be considered by the Senate without a cloture vote.

We urge you to file cloture on the motion to proceed on the 6-month extension and dedicate the time necessary to complete this important legislation, so we can put Americans back to work and keep our economy moving.

Sincerely,



Senator Barbara Boxer
Chairman
Committee on Environment and
Public Works



Senator James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and
Public Works



Senator Chris J. Dodd
Chairman
Committee on Banking, Housing and
Urban Affairs



Senator Richard C. Shelby
Ranking Member
Committee on Banking, Housing and
Urban Affairs



Senator John D. Rockefeller
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science
and Transportation



Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science
and Transportation



Senator Max Baucus
Chairman
Committee on Finance