

January 18, 2011

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Last July, we wrote to alert you to our growing concern that market indicators—absent a robust federal surface transportation program reauthorization—are pointing to a severe contraction in the domestic transportation construction market in up to half the states as the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds are exhausted this year. The result will be more job losses in the construction sector. Since that time, on several occasions, you have publicly stated that enactment of a strong, six-year surface transportation program reauthorization is now a priority for your Administration.

Over the last six months, however, there has been no tangible movement towards enactment of a long-term surface transportation bill, which is now 15 months overdue. Disturbing signs, though, continue to appear:

- Construction industry unemployment has continued to rise and is now almost 21 percent, more than double the national average.
- The National Association of State Budget Officers reports 14 states have already announced significant budget cuts again in FY 2011 and more states are likely to take similar action. Three states—Illinois, California and New Jersey—are in extreme fiscal difficulty.
- Your National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, identified the serious and growing transportation infrastructure investment gap as a threat to the nation's economy and proposed recommendations for addressing it in the short-term. But the commission's thoughtful work was quickly pushed to the sidelines.
- And this week, the Texas Transportation Institute will report that traffic congestion in the U.S. is now causing a "record" \$115 billion annual drag on the U.S. economy—more than five billion hours in lost productivity and four billion gallons of wasted fuel.

Mr. President, your ARRA transportation stimulus investment, by any measure, worked. It kept thousands of people in our industry employed who otherwise would have lost their jobs. It was the right thing for the country. And we deeply appreciate your elevation of the surface transportation reauthorization in recent months as a priority.

**But your active and aggressive leadership is urgently needed now to break the languor in Congress** and avert the serious, short- and long-term economic consequences of allowing the nation's surface transportation improvement programs to take a several decades step backward.

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We urge you to put the Congress on notice in your State of the Union Address that you expect them to work with you as a top priority **now** to produce a bipartisan transportation investment program that will put millions of Americans back to work and position America for continued and future economic growth and competitiveness.

America's transportation construction industry, the general business community, organized labor and transportation users are poised to support bold action now on a surface transportation authorization. On your February 7 visit to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce ask for their help.

Mr. President, we need your leadership to move this critical legislation through Congress early this year!

Sincerely,



T. Peter Ruane  
President & CEO