



April 9, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Republican Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

The Highway Users applauds your efforts to enact legislation to support the economy and protect the nation's citizens during this critical time. On behalf of the American Highway Users Alliance (the Highway Users), a coalition of 300 organizations including companies, trade associations, safety advocacy groups, and motoring clubs that represent millions of motorists, we **urge Congress to provide emergency funds to State highway and transportation departments and pass a long-term and robustly funded highway and transportation reauthorization in the next relief package being debated by Congress and the Administration or in a subsequent package – but as soon as possible this year.**

Every American relies on our highways to get vitally needed goods and services in an emergency like the fight to beat COVID-19. However, State DOTs are largely funded by fuel tax or sales tax revenues that have markedly dropped as motorists comply with State and local laws or advisories to remain home. To address the immediate impacts, Congress should increase investments to replace the steep decline in fuel taxes and other user fees. We urge Congress to increase formula federal-aid highway funding for fiscal years 2020-2021. An immediate infusion of \$50 billion to State DOTs should be used for any Surface Transportation Block Grant Program-eligible project. This is highly flexible funding for State DOTs.

In the long-term our roadways need to be safe, reliable, and efficient but, over the years, infrastructure has not been enough of a priority. The Highway Users are thankful for the continued hard work of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to complete a transportation reauthorization before the FAST Act expires on September 30, 2020. Focusing on our highway and transportation infrastructure in a relief package will help with our recovery effort and at the same time would infuse a long overdue investment that is cost beneficial to every American. In fact, the 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of the USDOT's Conditions and Performance Report on Highways, Bridges and Transit identifies a \$786.4 billion backlog of highway and bridge investments. The Highway Users strongly encourage the

preservation of the 80/20 split for highways and transit due to the truly massive needs that exist on our highways and bridges. Moreover, without prompt and strong action, this backlog will grow, as declines in state revenues are placing downward pressure on federal investment in highway projects that further safety, bolster our economy, and preserve personal mobility.

While promptly addressing transportation infrastructure, it is important that the federal Highway Trust Fund (HTF) be addressed. The HTF, which provides a steady source of investment for our essential transportation infrastructure, needs to be shored up as revenues decline from reductions in fuel consumption and sales tax revenue due to COVID-19. Congress should make a significant investment in the trust fund to pay for a long-term transportation authorization and help our Nation with its recovery.

During this emergency, infrastructure investment offers good-paying jobs that are mostly performed outside in the open air with workers keeping a safe distance from each other. Since these jobs are classified as essential and don't fall under the stay-at-home orders in most States, these jobs can continue when so much of our economy has stopped. With the unemployment rate skyrocketing, infrastructure jobs help employ displaced workers.

**Please include both emergency funds for FY20-21 and a long-term and robustly funded transportation authorization in the next relief package being considered or a relief package to follow this year.** Addressing our Nation's highway and transportation infrastructure needs will help every individual and business as we emerge from the pandemic. Enclosed is a summary of the Highways Users' priorities for the highway reauthorization. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [lauraperrotta@highways.org](mailto:lauraperrotta@highways.org) or 571-239-0765. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Laura Perrotta, CAE  
President and CEO

CC:

The Honorable John Barrasso, Chair, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio, Chair, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper, Ranking Member, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee

The Honorable Sam Graves, Ranking Member, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee