



**STATE OF TENNESSEE  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE**  
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**CLAY BRIGHT**  
COMMISSIONER

**BILL LEE**  
GOVERNOR

July 23, 2020

Delivered Via Email

Dear Honorable Members of the Tennessee Congressional Delegation:

Thank you for your continued efforts to provide relief to the people of Tennessee in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As you know, many state departments of transportation (DOTs) are facing severe losses in revenues, primarily from dedicated user fees, as nationwide vehicle traffic reduction bottomed out at around 50 percent during the height of the pandemic. In response, the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) has updated its revenue loss estimates and requested that Congress provide an immediate infusion of at least \$37 billion in backstop relief to state DOTs to ensure the delivery of planned transportation projects whose benefits will extend far beyond this pandemic and forestall further job losses in the public and private sectors.

We anticipate the loss of revenue to TDOT to be between \$45 and \$60 million for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2020, between \$100 and \$250 million for Fiscal Year 2021 (assuming federal funding remains at the current level), and approximately \$125 million per year for Fiscal Years 2022-26.

This will certainly delay planned transportation projects in Tennessee before the end of this fiscal year and beyond, particularly the IMPROVE Act projects that all Tennesseans know are so critical to the economic vitality of the state. If the revenue reductions continue as estimated, TDOT will be forced to prioritize maintenance efforts and delay these IMPROVE Act projects. Further, having fewer construction projects will result in a corresponding decrease in jobs in the highway construction industry and a multiplying effect on the already-struggling economy.

The current funding crisis also again highlights the critical need to reauthorize the FAST Act, which expires on September 30, 2020, and stabilize the federal Highway Trust Fund (HTF), on which state DOTs rely as the primary source of revenue for long-term construction projects. With the HTF continually giving out more than it is taking in, the already-broken fund is now facing an even further decline in revenue due to the pandemic's effect on economic activity. TDOT supports AASHTO's efforts for backstop relief funding for state DOTs, and we urge our Congressional delegation to preserve core state DOT capabilities and implement a strong surface reauthorization bill to drive our state and national economic recovery in the years ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Clay Bright".

Clay Bright  
Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Transportation