

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

December 3, 2018

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Transportation and Housing Subcommittee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Frelinghuysen and Ranking Members Leahy and Lowey:

As members of the bipartisan Congressional Bus Caucus, we are writing in strong support of at least a \$550 million increase for the Federal Transit Administration's Bus and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Investment program provided for in the FY 2019 Transportation and Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations bill.

Robust federal investment is key to ensuring safe, efficient and affordable public transit systems, especially buses, for hardworking Americans. However, bus transit systems continue to struggle with the impacts of reduced federal funding, dating back to the Great Recession. Recently released 2017 National Transit Database data demonstrates transit fleets are getting older and fleet size is contracting. Between 2009 and 2017, the percentage of buses operating past useful life increased by 45 percent and the percentage of buses operating more than 15 years nearly doubled. Since 2012, the size of bus fleets contracted 18 percent, highlighting the pressure on transit systems to do more with less.

To address these issues, the Senate increased bus funding by \$400 million in its FY 2019 THUD spending bill and allocated additional investment like the ratios designated under the *Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act*. The House's FY 2019 THUD spending bill increased funding for bus programs by \$550 million and directed a large portion of those funds, approximately \$300 million, to competitive grants for bus and bus facility projects.

As conference negotiations continue, we strongly support at least a \$550 million increase for the Bus and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Investment program and an allocation of funds to the competitive bus program, as provided for in the House bill. We have heard directly from transit systems and riders in local communities about the impact lack of investment in bus transit can have on ridership, reliability and the growing backlog of capital needs. As members of the

bipartisan Congressional Bus Caucus, we are committed to address these issues to bring transit systems up to a state of good repair.

Bus service is a lifeline for people to get to work, doctor visits, grocery shopping and to enjoy recreational opportunities. With more than 51 percent of all transit trips occurring on buses, the benefits of federal bus investment will spur economic growth in local communities across the country.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



Cheri Bustos  
Member of Congress



Darin LaHood  
Member of Congress



Glenn 'GT' Thompson  
Member of Congress



Dave Loebsack  
Member of Congress



Tom O'Halleran  
Member of Congress



David Young  
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



Rodney Davis  
Member of Congress



Michael R. Turner  
Member of Congress



Denny Heck  
Member of Congress