United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 5, 2013

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232 United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner:

As Chairmen of the Committee on Environment and Public Works, the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, we write to express our strong disappointment that the full-year continuing resolution for fiscal year (FY) 2013 being considered in the House of Representatives this week continues to disregard the funding levels negotiated during the 112th Congress in the surface transportation bill, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21). We are also very concerned that the full-year continuing resolution would harm efforts to improve the safety of our transportation system.

Last September, we wrote to voice our concerns that the FY 2013 continuing resolution to fund the government through March 27, 2013, failed to honor the funding levels included in MAP-21. The reduction of funding included in that continuing resolution resulted in states receiving fewer funds to repair their roads and bridges and put construction workers back to work, and shortchanged critical transportation safety programs. At that time, according to CQ, a Republican spokesman for the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee stated that the appropriate spending levels would be "overridden when a full-year transportation appropriations bill is enacted."

Instead, the House has proposed a continuing resolution to complete FY 2013 that includes even more egregious cuts to transportation. Instead of preserving the funding levels authorized in MAP-21, this continuing resolution would apply an across-the-board reduction to the funding levels included in MAP-21 that would result in transportation spending levels even lower than the those enacted in FY 2012, and in certain cases would apply drastic reductions to highway safety programs.

MAP-21 passed with overwhelmingly bipartisan support, with a vote of 373 to 52 in the House and a vote of 74 to 19 in the Senate, and the commitments made in that bill must be kept. As we have stated before, the funding levels in MAP-21 are fully paid for with offsets included in the bill, and therefore honoring the bipartisan and bicameral agreement in MAP-21 will not increase the Federal deficit. Not adhering to these levels would ignore the will of Congress and hurt efforts to maintain safe roads and bridges, repair public transportation systems, improve driver safety, and help construction workers get back to work.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, every $1 billion in Federal highway funding that is matched by state and local investments creates or sustains over 34,000 jobs

through all sectors of the economy, and every $1 billion in Federal public transportation funding that is similarly matched supports 37,500 jobs. Failing to honor the overwhelmingly bipartisan, bicameral agreement in MAP-21, and further reducing funding levels below FY 2012, would mean an unacceptable funding cut of over $785 million to highway, highway safety, and public transportation programs, which would result in the loss of over 25,000 jobs. These are jobs that can be filled by unemployed construction workers, who have been especially hard hit by the recession, to repair our roads and bridges and improve public transportation facilities and infrastructure.

But it does not stop there. The full-year continuing resolution being developed in the House would seriously hamper efforts to improve surface transportation safety across the board. MAP-21 establishes a new comprehensive framework to oversee the safety of public transportation throughout the nation, but the proposed continuing resolution ignores these important new requirements and prohibits the implementation of key elements of these safety provisions. On the highway safety side, MAP-21 reprograms existing highway safety grant programs and funding to create new efforts aimed at reducing distracted driving, improving safety for teen drivers, and preventing drunk driving. Rather than fund these programs, the House bill would cut the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's spending by $48.5 million, nearly nine percent of the agency's total spending in this area. Funding reductions in the continuing resolution would also hamper efforts to enhance and enforce vital safety requirements for cars, trucks, and buses.

For the businesses and the working people of this country, for the drivers of cars and trucks, for the users of public transportation, for the safety of our families in this country, and for this economy, the House should restore the funding authorized for FY 2013.

Sincerely,

Barbara Boxer
Chairman
Committee on Environment and
Public Works

Tim Johnson
Chairman
Committee on Banking, Housing, and
Urban Affairs

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