



FreedomWorks



Nationwide Conservative Groups: Promote Fiscal Responsibility in Upcoming Transportation and Infrastructure Spending

May 11, 2017

Dear Senators and Representatives:

On behalf of our organizations and the millions of Americans we represent, we write to encourage you to prioritize fiscal responsibility while addressing the nation's infrastructure needs. Previous transportation spending policies shepherded by the Obama administration — the 2009 "stimulus" and all its attendant boondoggles — were chock-full of waste and pet projects and made the nation's fiscal problems worse. American families cannot afford to repeat the failed mistakes of the past.

Forthcoming transportation plans should be an opportunity for Congress and the Trump administration to further relieve the economy from bureaucratic and regulatory hurdles while maximizing taxpayer dollars. Here's how:

Reform environmental review processes. Lengthy and often duplicative environmental impact studies increase project costs and drag project timelines. Possible reforms could include the removal of greenhouse gas emissions from the review process and limiting the scope and application of the National Environmental Policy Act as well as other planning and analysis mandates. Doing so would save time and reallocate limited tax dollars from paperwork and red tape to asphalt and concrete.

Repeal draconian labor regulations. Overturning President Barack Obama's executive order requiring federal contractors to use Project Labor Agreements on federally-funded projects and repealing the Davis-Bacon wage mandate that drives up project costs by 22 percent are two great places to start. Heritage Foundation research shows that repealing Davis-Bacon and reinvesting the funds back into infrastructure would add over 160,000 construction jobs to the economy.

Prioritize transportation dollars on core infrastructure projects. A growing percentage of federal transportation spending — now up to 25 percent of all spending — is going to non-highway projects, diverting these dollars from their ostensible purpose of building roads and bridges. Infrastructure dollars should go toward core projects — not on ancillary projects like highway beautification and public transit.



Empower the states. States, localities, and the private sector understand local needs better than Washington bureaucrats. Local policymakers should have the flexibility to manage projects reflecting local priorities and manage their funding. Federal policymakers can get out of the way by removing existing federal barriers to state-based funding and financing.



Fully pay for projects. The spirit of President Trump's first budget blueprint, the so-called "skinny budget" that cuts non-defense discretionary spending, should be applied to future transportation spending initiatives. Any new spending should be offset with spending cuts, not tax increases nor budget gimmicks.



Seek spending reforms instead of new funding sources. Two concerning ideas circulating on Capitol Hill include creating a national infrastructure bank and using new revenues from corporate income repatriated from abroad. Congress should be cautious of both. The first would lead to more bureaucracy and subsidies for the politically-connected at taxpayers' expense, and the second has little to do with transportation issues and instead is a symptom of our broken federal tax code that should be addressed in the context of comprehensive tax reform.



We look forward to working with you in promoting responsibility in upcoming transportation and infrastructure initiatives. Keeping these conservative principles in mind as you craft plan details will improve our nation's infrastructure and create jobs while protecting taxpayers. Thank you for your consideration.



Sincerely,



Christine Harbin, Vice President of External Affairs
Americans for Prosperity



James L. Martin, Chairman
60 Plus Association

Grover Norquist, President
Americans for Tax Reform



Leigh Hixon, Senior Director of Policy Relations
Alabama Policy Institute



David Boyle, Executive Director
Alaska Policy Forum



Phil Kerpen, President
American Commitment



Tim Doyle, Vice President of Policy and General Counsel
American Council for Capital Formation



Sean Noble, President
American Encore



Gary L. Bauer, President
American Values



Peter J. Thomas, Chairman
Americans for Constitutional Liberty



David Stevenson, Director, Center for Energy Competitiveness
Caesar Rodney Institute



Norm Singleton, President
Campaign For Liberty



Garrett Ballengee, Executive Director
Cardinal Institute



Jeffrey Mazzella, President
Center for Individual Freedom



Kim Crockett, Vice President and General Counsel
Center of the American Experiment

Francis X. De Luca, President
Civitas Institute

David McIntosh, President
Club for Growth

Michael J. Bowen, CEO
Stephani Scruggs, COO
Coalition For a Strong America

Tom Brinkman Jr., Chairman
Coalition Opposed to Additional Spending and Taxes (COAST)

Jonathan Bydlak, President
Coalition to Reduce Spending



Nick Dranias, President & Executive Director
Compact for America Educational Foundation

Kent Lassman, President
Competitive Enterprise Institute

Mark Lucas, Executive Director
Concerned Veterans for America



Craig Richardson, President
Energy & Environment Action Team



Tom McCabe, CEO
Freedom Foundation

Annette Meeks, CEO
Freedom Foundation of Minnesota



Nathan Nascimento, Vice President of Policy
Freedom Partners Chamber of Commerce



Adam Brandon, President and CEO
FreedomWorks



George Landrith, President
Frontiers of Freedom



Andrew Clark, President
Generation Opportunity



Andresen Blom, Executive Director
Grassroot Hawaii Action



Michael A. Needham, Chief Executive Officer
Heritage Action for America



Sabrina Schaeffer, Executive Director
Independent Women's Forum



Heather Higgens, President and CEO
Independent Women's Voice

Jon Sanders, Director of Regulatory Studies
John Locke Foundation



Brett Healy, President
Maclver Institute



Forest Thigpen, President
Mississippi Center for Public Policy



Harry C. Alford, President/CEO
National Black Chamber of Commerce



Willes K. Lee, President
National Federation of Republican Assemblies



Pete Sepp, President
National Taxpayers Union

Doug Kagan, President
Nebraska Taxpayers for Freedom

George Kneisser, Executive Director
NJ Citizens for Property Tax reform

Abhay Patel, Interim Executive Director
Pelican Institute for Public Policy

Derrick Hollie, President
Reaching America



William Whipple III, President
Secure America's Future Economy



David Williams, President
Taxpayers Protection Alliance



Judson Phillips, Founder
Tea Party Nation



Nathanael Ferguson, Executive Director
Texas Public Policy Action

Brooke Rollins, President
Texas Public Policy Foundation

Dr. Robert McClure, President and CEO
The James Madison Institute



Daniel Garza, Executive Director
The LIBRE Initiative

Michael W. Thompson, Chairman and President
Thomas Jefferson Institute for Public Policy



Carl Bearden, Executive Director
United for Missouri

Mariya Frost, Director, Coles Center for Transportation
Washington Policy Center

