

September 13, 2011

Dear Congressman:

On behalf of the Southern New Jersey Development Council (SNJDC) I wanted to take this opportunity to urge you to support an extension of federal surface transportation funding and programs before they expire. We support the establishment of a federal multi-year capital budget, separated from non-capital federal expenditures, for public works infrastructure construction and major rehabilitation, similar to those used by state and local governments.

A federal capital budget could create a mechanism to help reduce the constant conflict between short term and long term needs, while providing the financial assurance that federal, state, and local governments require in order to move forward with infrastructure investments.

The current system causes major inefficiencies in the planning, design, and construction process for long term projects.

The SNJDC is a member-based organization charged with promoting, responsible regional economic investment, development and growth in South Jersey.

Surface transportation infrastructure is a critical engine of the nation's economy. To compete in a global economy, improve our quality of life and raise our standards of living, we must successfully rebuild America's public infrastructure. Faced with that task, the nation must have a significantly improved and expanded surface transportation system. We can only accomplish this through the solving the funding and financing question and establishing a sustainable funding source.

America's highways, bridges, tunnels and transit systems are suffering from severe underinvestment. By improving the nation's deteriorating surface transportation system, both economic and job creation opportunities will be provided, while creating a multi-modal transportation system for the Twenty-First Century. According to the American Road and Transportation Builders Association and the American Society of Civil Engineers, the nation's transportation infrastructure system has an annual output of \$120 billion in construction work and contributes \$244 billion in total economic activity to the nation's gross domestic product. The Federal Highway Administration estimates that every \$1 billion invested in the nation's highways supports 27,823 jobs, including 9,537 on-site construction jobs, 4,324 jobs in supplier industries, and 13,962 jobs throughout the rest of the economy.

**WE MUST INVEST NOW BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.**

The current authorization of highway and transit programs and their dedicated revenue sources are set to expire on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2011. Failure to extend this funding will

deliver, yet another, devastating set-back to our economy and further damage an engineering and construction industry.

Given the dire state of our infrastructure and current economic conditions, we cannot afford to allow essential transportation preservation and improvement projects to stall. Please work with your colleagues and congressional leaders to pass a timely extension of current transportation programs, providing the time needed for passage of a long-term authorization bill that will support sustained job creation and economic growth.

The current federal budget process does not differentiate between expenditures for current consumption and long-term investment; even though infrastructure, by its very nature, is a long term investment.

We look forward to Congress developing robust surface transportation authorization legislation which is founded on a strong national vision, adequate funding and new technology; while developing an integrated, multi-modal national transportation system. This is vital to business, economic development and to all of your constituents who depend on a safe and efficient transportation network.

Regards,

Marlene Asselta, President