



One Region. One Voice. One Future.

April 26, 2010

Honorable Barbara Boxer
United States Senate
Chair, Environment & Public Works Committee
112 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Subject: Mobility 21 Recommendations to EPW Committee for Moving Ahead for Progress (MAP-21) surface transportation authorization

Transmitted Via Email

Dear Senator Boxer:

At your request, Mobility 21, representing the transportation commissions, metropolitan planning organizations, and major business coalitions in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura Counties, and the Automobile Club of Southern California (AAA); who represent 21 million Southern Californians respectfully submit to you our comments as you draft MAP-21. We commend your leadership, Senator, and look forward to working with you.

Beginning with Chairman Oberstar's vision and legislation as a basis for our feedback, we have attached an *initial* list of policy recommendations for your review. As the details of your bill emerge, we appreciate the opportunity to continue this important and evolving dialogue. Mobility 21 will provide additional recommendations in the coming weeks as we delve further into major policy issues as a region. It is our priority to provide you with a consensus position from Southern California.

First, we laud the work of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee in developing a proposal to usher in a new era of surface transportation investment. We wish to provide constructive input on improving STAA and assisting you with the development of MAP-21. We are supportive of the priorities you have identified for your bill: reducing congestion and its impacts, goods movement, safety, sustainable funding, maintaining the national character of the interstate and federal highway system, and the establishment of performance criteria.

This transmittal includes general areas of agreement with STAA; initial areas identified for modification from STAA or current law, including attachments that contain specific legislative language recommendations; and policy issues

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identified that require further vetting by Mobility 21 before substantive recommendations can be made.

We wish to emphasize three important overarching points as you draft MAP-21:

- 1) Any new programs created in your legislation should not take from the existing core program; new programs should come with new funding.
- 2) A strong preference towards programs that create incentives rather than mandates, especially with regard to greenhouse gas target goal reductions.
- 3) Mobility 21 supports the development of effectiveness and benefit criteria that will allow earmarks to be included in MAP-21 to bolster public confidence and ensure that scarce resources are directed to the best projects.

As California's Senator, we know you understand the significance to our economy of getting goods to market, reducing congestion, and improving livability in our 207 communities serving 21 million residents. We eagerly look forward to opening this policy dialogue with you.

Mobility 21 supports these priorities in STAA and encourages their inclusion in MAP-21:

- ❖ Principle of significantly increased investment in surface transportation;
- ❖ Recognition of goods movement as a national economic priority;
- ❖ Recognition of urban areas as critical areas for investment;
- ❖ Recognition of the need to expedite project delivery;
- ❖ Elimination of High Density States and Growing States formulas;
- ❖ Reforms to FTA New & Small Starts program; and
- ❖ Raising borrowing limits in and expansion of the TIFIA program.

Mobility 21 *initially* recommended areas for improvement on STAA and current law:

FREIGHT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: Section 1105, STAA, pages 25-50
[Policy Rec. M]

- ❖ Mobility 21 recommends the creation of a Freight Trust Fund with a dedicated new funding source to invest in goods movement projects. Suggested language attached.

PROJECTS OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE & FREIGHT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: Sections 120 and 1105, STAA [Policy Rec's. B, C, I, J, K, M]

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- ❖ Mobility 21 recommends language that clarifies that rail safety, grade separation projects are eligible project types in STAA’s Projects of National Significance (PNS) and Freight Improvement Program (FIP) or any other new freight-oriented program in MAP-21; and
- ❖ Environmental mitigation should be a criterion for project selection in any such program.

METROPOLITAN MOBILITY & ACCESS PROGRAM: *Section 1208, STAA [Policy Rec. L]*

- ❖ Mobility 21 will continue to evaluate policy options for a new “Metropolitan Mobility & Access” program; however, we recommend that such a program aims to move people and goods *through* urban areas, not just *within* them. Specific language is included.

EXPEDITE PROJECT DELIVERY: *Section 1508, STAA (Section 134 in current law) [Policy Rec’s E, F, G]*

- ❖ Mobility 21 supports simple new language that would expedite project delivery through administrative means by allowing amendments to transportation plans without DOT approval when said amendments do not impact air quality conformity or financial constraint. Such changes do not impact any environmental review processes.

ALTERNATIVE FUEL TAX CREDIT: *Section 1113 of SAFETELU [Policy Rec. A]*

- ❖ Mobility 21 recommends extending existing tax credits for alternative fuels for five years to synchronize with authorization cycles.

CMAQ: *Sections 1101, 1103, 1108, STAA [Policy Rec. D]*

- ❖ Mobility 21 agencies have effectively put CMAQ to work for alternative fuels and related infrastructure, HOV lanes, grade separations, and cost effective emission reduction activities. We recommend reallocating unspent and unallocated CMAQ funds from states with low obligation rates so that states such as California can ensure all CMAQ dollars are used to reduce congestion and clean our air; and
- ❖ Mobility 21 recommends maintaining eligibility for diesel retrofits and ITS projects.

FIXED GUIDEWAY MODERNIZATION: *Section 5309 of current law [Policy Rec. H]*

- ❖ Current STAA language changes the current program from an apportionment program to a grant program implemented by the Secretary. Mobility 21 recommends amending this language to further

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clarify the grant process, what criteria will be used along with the question of keeping the Tier 7 program. We recommend a clear a new program which adequately recognizes systems such as those in Southern California which are newer than others in some areas of the country, but are aging quickly.

Policy Issues on on which Mobility 21 is working to develop recommendations and consensus:

- 1) Goods Movement funding structure and policy
- 2) Metropolitan Mobility & Access program
- 3) Office of Public Benefit (P3's & Tolling)
- 4) Green House Gas Reduction Policies (including Offices of Intermodalism and Livability)
- 5) Title for commuter rail in MAP-21
- 6) Rewarding and incentivizing "self-help" counties
- 7) Assessment of current SAFETEA-LU programs that benefit Southern California

In addition to our formal partners, Mobility 21 is working with a broad group of transportation stakeholders in Southern California on the recommendations above as well as future input that we will provide. The vetting of these recommendations has been a collaborative effort of Mobility 21 public and private members as well as organizations outside of our membership. We look forward to presenting you with additional consensus recommendations from our region over the months ahead. Specifically, our coalition will engage in a deeper discussion on the seven topics listed immediately above over the next several weeks, with the intention of delivering a second round of consensus-based policy recommendations from Southern California. As you or your staff has questions for us, we stand available to respond and work with you closely on MAP-21. Mobility 21's Executive Director, Marnie O'Brien Primmer can be reached at 949-698-2856 or mprimmer@mobility21.com

Sincerely,
Mobility 21 Board of Directors

See Signature Block starting next page.

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Deborah Robinson Barmack
Executive Director, San Bernardino Association of Governments

Lucy Dunn
President and Chief Executive Officer, Orange County Business Council

Steven Finnegan
Manager of Government Affairs and Public Policy
Automobile Club of Southern California
Mobility 21 Chairman

Hasan Ihkrata
Executive Director, Southern California Association of Governments

Tom Kelley
President, Camarillo Chamber of Commerce, representing
Ventura County Federated Chambers of Commerce

Will Kempton
Chief Executive Officer, Orange County Transportation Authority

Darren Kettle
Executive Director, Ventura County Transportation Commission

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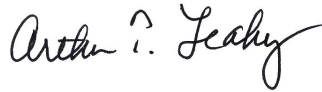
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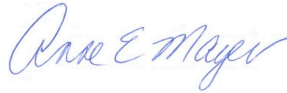
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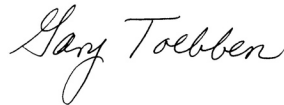
Arthur T. Leahy
Chief Executive Officer, Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority



Anne Mayer
Executive Director, Riverside County Transportation Commission



Cindy Roth
President and Chief Executive Officer, Greater Riverside Chambers of Commerce



Gary Toebben
President and Chief Executive Officer, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

Cc: Chairman Dodd
Chairman Oberstar
Bettina Poirier
Kathy Dedrick
Andrew Dohrmann
Mitch Warren
Jim Kolb
Amy Scarton
Allison Dane
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Encl: Initial specific policy recommendations of Mobility 21

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