

National Campaign Transit Justice

A project of just|strategy

The Honorable Mike Quigley
Ranking Member
House T-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cindy Hyde-Smith
Vice-Chair
Senate T-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger,
Chair
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
House T-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Chair
Senate T-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee
S-128 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Murray, Collins, Schatz and Hyde-Smith, and Representatives Granger, DeLauro, Cole, and Quigley,

We write to you today to urgently ask you to keep the promise of the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) throughout the Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations process, particularly when it comes to programs that make transit more affordable and accessible.

With great economic uncertainty throughout our economy, public transit is more important than ever. Public transit is not only an engine for economic growth and jobs; it is also an important bulwark against our dependence on foreign oil.

At this critical moment, the IIJA gives cities and states the ability to expand public transit options, replace thousands of deficient transit vehicles, including buses, with clean, zero-emission vehicles, and improve accessibility for the elderly and people with disabilities. But that is not possible unless Congress fulfills its promise to the American public and fully funds the vital programs contained in the bill.

We particularly urge you to fund:

Transit funding

We ask you to include full funding in the FY2025 appropriations bill for public transportation programs authorized in the IIJA. For FY2025, the IIJA authorized \$14.2 billion in contract authority from the Highway Trust Fund and \$3.15 billion from general funds (along with \$4.25 billion in advance appropriations). These programs are extremely important for addressing continuing inequities in access to opportunity. Black and brown people are more likely to rely on transit, as are people with lower incomes. Yet many communities of color and low-income neighborhoods remain underserved, with infrequent and unreliable transit, which makes it more difficult for people to reach jobs, healthcare, and other services. Recognizing these challenges, the President and Congress promised a historic level of investment in transit through passage of the IIIJA.

We want to call particular attention to the Capital Investment Grant (CIG) Program, which is authorized at \$3 billion for FY2025 (with an additional \$1.6 billion in IIJA advance appropriations). The CIG Program is the largest general-fund transit program, and has often been subject to cuts in the budget process. This program funds the construction or expansion of new transit lines in both large and small communities, with project evaluation based in part on considerations such as the project's integration with affordable housing and land use plans. As we confront high gas prices, unhealthy air, and continuing pandemic uncertainties, ensuring access to high-quality frequent transit for all must be a priority.

We request that you include \$3 billion, as authorized under IIJA, for the CIG Program for FY2025.

RAISE and MEGA Competitive Grant Programs

The Rebuilding America's Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program, formerly known as BUILD and TIGER, funds a diverse array of capital improvements in surface transportation projects and has been an important source of support for transit and safe walking or bike access to transit. The new National Infrastructure Project Assistance (MEGA) program will provide grants on a competitive basis to support projects of national and regional significance, including transit, which will help provide new multimodal transportation options in areas currently lacking them. The IIJA guarantees \$1.5 billion to RAISE but authorizes

Congress to add \$1.5 billion in annual appropriations as well as \$2 billion for MEGA. We ask that Congress fund the combined RAISE and MEGA line item at its full \$3.5 billion, in addition to the funding guaranteed in the infrastructure law.

Healthy Streets Program

The Healthy Streets Program is a new program created under the IIJA with an authorization of \$100 million annually. This program supports equitable, climate-smart investment in our urban infrastructure and would fund projects that reduce flooding, improve air quality and mitigate the urban heat island effect within low-income neighborhoods and communities of color by providing grants to state and local governments, as well as nonprofits, to plant trees and deploy smart surfaces, such as reflective pavement in urban heat islands and porous pavement in flood prone areas. The program would also fund assessments of urban heat islands and tree canopies with a specific focus on areas of extreme heat and poor air quality, including equity mapping of tree canopy gaps, flood-prone locations, and urban heat island hot spots in relation to communities of color, low-income populations, and transit stops and pedestrian walkways.

Since surface infrastructure materials in urban areas are traditionally selected based on lowest initial cost, most city surfaces are dark and impervious, absorbing roughly 90% of incoming heat and increasing water runoff and localized flooding. For this reason, cities are becoming increasingly hotter (the urban heat island effect), less equitable, and more prone to flooding.

Urban heat islands pose a serious threat to public health, particularly for children, the elderly, people with respiratory illnesses, and those who work outdoors. High temperatures also intensify air pollution in cities by creating smog, a dangerous pollutant that can make it difficult to breathe, triggering asthma attacks and spiking emergency room visits. Areas of urban heat island disproportionately affect low-income communities and communities of color, where walking, biking and taking transit for transportation can be an economic necessity. Addressing heat islands, reducing flooding and planting trees near pedestrian walkways and transit stops respects the dignity and comfort of all our people when using our transportation system. Climate change will increase the prevalence and severity of these threats over the coming years. Significant investments now could help mitigate the worst impacts.

We request that you fund the Healthy Streets program at \$100 million in FY 2025, as authorized under the IIJA..

Reconnecting Communities

IIJA established a new Reconnecting Communities Pilot ([RCP](#)) discretionary grant program, funded with \$1 billion over the next 5 years. We applaud the administration for their efforts to reconnect communities, including a disproportionate number of Black and brown communities, that were previously cut off from economic opportunities by transportation infrastructure.

Starting in the 1950s, federal highway funds were used to construct highways to remove homes and businesses of Black and Latino persons deemed undesirable and construct a freeway system that erected physical boundaries separating people and communities of color. The

physical isolation of neighborhoods of color effectuated by federally-funded highways isolated Americans on the basis of race and national origin from public facilities, services, quality schools and access to jobs outside the impoverished boundaries of these segregated neighborhoods. Cities like New Orleans and Houston have seen their Black communities decimated by highways. This isolation has caused lasting harms in Black and Latino communities in particular. For example, homes and businesses in the impacted Black and Latino communities have vastly lower property value than white communities.

We request that you include \$102 million in your FY2025 appropriations bill for the RCP discretionary grant program, as authorized by IIJA. This program will continue the progress that has been made repairing past harms to underserved Black and Brown communities that have been disproportionately disconnected from vital economic services due to highway construction.

Thriving Communities

The [Thriving Communities Program](#) is an initiative to help disadvantaged, rural, and Tribal areas develop and deliver transformational community revitalization projects. No one knows their communities' needs better than those who live there, yet too often, small and disadvantaged communities lack the technical expertise and capacity to effectively compete for federal grants. Through the Thriving Communities Program, local areas receive intensive technical assistance to help them plan and develop a comprehensive pipeline of transportation and community revitalization projects. By participating in this program, these communities are empowered to utilize the historic funding provided under the IIJA to deliver infrastructure projects that meet their economic and community goals. While this program is not authorized under IIJA, it is a crucial program that provides technical assistance, planning, and capacity building support to communities, enabling them to advance transportation projects that support their goals and needs.

We request that you include \$75 million in the FY2025 appropriations bill for the Thriving Communities program. This funding will help more people access safe mobility choices, affordable housing, and economic opportunity, yielding long-term results for distressed communities across the country.

Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP)

While we appreciate the inclusion of \$60 million for the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program ([ATIIP](#)) in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 budget, we are disappointed that ATIIP is not included in the FY2024 Further Consolidated Appropriations Act nor the President's proposed budget for FY 2025. Securing this funding is essential to fully leverage the IIJA, facilitating the development and construction of safe, accessible walking, cycling, and public transportation routes. This investment will significantly improve the quality of life for millions of Americans, particularly those who cannot drive or choose alternative transportation options.

The provision of safe and accessible connections for walking and biking offers numerous advantages. It helps reduce climate emissions and alleviate traffic congestion by encouraging a

shift to zero-emission transportation methods. Additionally, it meets the transport and economic needs of smaller towns looking to establish better connections between communities. Moreover, establishing active transportation networks is essential to address increasing fatalities and serious injuries among pedestrians and bicyclists, making routine travel safer for everyone.

Given the recent publication of the Department of Transportation's ATIIIP Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and the growing interest from communities nationwide in applying for these grants, we request you allocate \$200 million in FY2025, as authorized under IIJA.

The funding levels proposed above represent what is necessary to realize the intended benefits of each program – many of which are supported by authorizations from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Unfortunately, the budgetary limitations enforced by the Fiscal Responsibility Act mean that many programs may ultimately be funded at levels insufficient to fully realize their benefits. While we are disappointed by these limitations, we appreciate any efforts by the Appropriations Committee to maintain the foundation of support these programs need to operate effectively in FY 2025.

Sincerely,

Shruti Vaidyanathan Director of Transportation Advocacy, National Resources Defence Council (NRDC)

Will Anderson Ass. Director-Clean Transportation for All campaign Sierra Club

Kevin Shen Policy Analyst Union of Concerned Scientists

LeeAnn Hall Executive Director National Campaign for Transit Justice

Mike McGinn Executive Director America Walks

Oren Kadosh Labor Network for Sustainability

Caron Whitaker Deputy Executive Director League of American Bicyclists

Josh Naramore Senior Program Manager for Policy National Association of City

Transportation Officials (NACTO)

Beth Osborne Director Transportation for America

Brett Morgan Transportation Director 1000 Friends of Oregon

Terry Wiggins Steering Committee Member 350 Milwaukee

Lauren Weston Executive Director Acterra: Action for a Healthy Planet

Allen Muchnick Co-Chair Active Prince William

Amy Rynell Executive Director Active Transportation Alliance

Anna Leslie Director Allston Brighton Health Collaborative

Celeste Treece President Better Bus Coalition

Rob Zako Executive Director Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation

(BEST)

John Tallmadge Executive Director Bike Durham

Johan Andrade President Bike North Bergen

Tom Lucas President Bike Palatine Club

Caila Brown Executive Director Bike Walk Savannah

Nile Malloy Climate Justice Director California Environmental Justice Alliance

Taylor Jaffe Environmental Justice Coordinator Catskill Mountainkeeper

Brian O'Malley	President & CEO	Central Maryland Transportation Alliance
Jenny Brekhus	City Council Member	City of Reno
Jeff Robbins	Executive Director	CleanAIRE NC
JosephSchwarten	Chairperson	Clevelanders for Public Transit
Emmett Hopkins	Policy Manager, Transportation & Mining Climate and Community Project	
Anthony Gault	Workforce Development Organizer	Coalition for Economic Justice
Cheryl Cort	Policy Director	Coalition for Smarter Growth
Michele Burton	Program Manager	Community Healthcare Coalition of Greater Prince William
Aaron Greiner	Executive Director	CultureHouse
Latrice White	Secretary	Dale City Civic Association
Molly McKinley	Policy Director	Denver Streets Partnership
Todd Scott	Executive Director	Detroit Greenways Coalition
Renard Monczunski	Organizer	Detroit People's Platform
Nanci Gasiel	Advocacy Chairperson	Downers Grove Bicycle Club
Charles Gerena	Lead Organizer	Drive Electric RVA
Niles Barnes	Deputy Director	East Coast Greenway Alliance
Todd Weber	Volunteer, Chapter Co-Leader	Elders Climate Action (ECA) Northern California (NorCal) Chapter
Richard Burke	Founder, Chapter Leader	Elders Climate Action (ECA) Southern California (NorCal) Chapter
Jennifer Van Dyck		Elevator Action Group/Rise and Resist
Parker Thompson	Executive Director	Elgin Community Bikes
Mimi Pierre Johnson	President	Elmont Cultural Center
Ann Mesnikoff	Federal Legislative Director	Environmental Law & Policy Center
Yvonne Shields	Board Member	Foundation for Homan Square
Chelsea Allinger	Executive Director	Greater Greater Washington
AndreaMarpillero-Colomina	Sustainable Communities Program Director	GreenLatinos
JohnFlaherty	Deputy Director	Grow Smart RI
Melanie Hall	Policy Director	HEAL Utah
Leslie McKnight	Director of Community Health	Health Department
Emmanuelle Morgen	Executive Director	Hudson County Complete Streets
Elizabeta Stacishin	Climate Policy Adviser	Indivisible Colorado
C. Stonebraker-Martinez	Co director	InterReligious Task Force on Central America
SusanDe Vos	President	Madison Area Bus Advocates
Ben Chin	Deputy Director	Maine People's Alliance
Lew Finfer	Director	Massachusetts Action for Justice
Shavel'le Olivier	Executive Director	Mattapan Food and Fitness Coalition
Eberhard Veit	President	McHenry County Bicycle Advocates - Cycling without age
Yvonne Maldonado	Co-Director	MH Action
Chris Sandvig	Executive Director	Mobilify Southwestern Pennsylvania
Eli Lipmen	Executive Director	Move LA

Akshai Singh	Director	MOVE Ohio
Kelli Refer	Executive Director	Move Redmond
Patricia Victorson	President	NAMI Prince William
Christopher Schuyler	Managing Attorney, Lawyers for the Public Interest	Disability Justice Program New York
Aaron Brown		No More Freeways
Rochelle Jackson	Chair, North Lawndale Community Coordinating Council	Transportation/Infrastructure Committee
Andrew Campbell	Group co-leader	Park Ridge Cycling, Illinois
Noa Banayan	Director of Federal Affairs	PeopleForBikes
Kris Nelson	Principal	Phoenix Finance
Laura Chu Wiens	Executive Director	Pittsburghers for Public Transit
Matthew Baker	Policy Director	Planning and Conservation League
Laura Martin	Executive Director	Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada
Sean Jeans-Gail	Vice President - Gov't Affairs	Rail Passengers Association
Cody Donahue	Director of Policy and Advocacy	Reconnect Rochester
Patricia Raub	Co-chair,	RI Transit Riders
Dave Simmons	Executive Director	Ride Illinois
Danny Pearlstein		Riders Alliance
Dan Crawford	Chair	Roanoke Group, Sierra Club
Kristina Pappas	President	SF League of Conservation Voters
Christine Canaly	Director	San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council
Ian Griffiths	Policy Director	Seamless Bay Area
Kyle Lawrence	Executive Director	Shenandoah Valley Bicycle Coalition
Michael Drackley		South West active transit
Eric McClure	Executive Director	StreetsPAC
Shannon Binns	Executive Director	Sustain Charlotte
Karen Kress	Senior Director	Tampa Downtown Partnership
Dion Cartwright	President & CEO	The Funders Network
Sarah Iannarone	Executive Director	The Street Trust
Barr Reed	Executive Director	The Transit Coalition
Elliot Rossen	Coordinating Committee member	Third Act Illinois
Christopher Ramirez	Executive Director	Together for Brothers (T4B)
Carter Lavin	Co-Director	Transbay Coalition
Abibat Rahman-Davies	Transportation Policy Advocate	TransForm
Connor Descheemaker	Coalition Manager	Transit Forward Philadelphia
Kimberly Huntress Inskip		Transit Trekker
Jarred Johnson	Executive Director	TransitMatters
Kirk Hovenkotter	Executive Director	Transportation Choices Coalition
Pete Wilson	Senior Policy Director	Transportation for Massachusetts
Megan Owens	Executive Director	Transportation Riders United
Jaqi Cohen	Director of Climate & Equity Policy	Tri-State Transportation Campaign
Sarah Iannarone	Executive Director	TST Action Fund
Patrick Santana	Lead	Vibrant Littleton

Brantley Tyndall President
Meredith Montgomery Executive Director
Deloris Lucas
Group)

Virginia Bicycling Federation
Walk Bike Nashville
We Keep You Rollin' (Bike & Wellness