



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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MICHAEL A. NUTTER
Mayor

July 12, 2011

Chairman John Mica
U.S. House of Representative Committee on
Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Mica:

I commend you for advancing the national discussion on America's surface transportation needs, with the introduction of your framework for a six year authorization of surface transportation programs. Your efforts to streamline project delivery, simplify Federal grant programs and create new opportunities to leverage Federal funds are important ideas to garner increased value from Federal transportation investment. However, as I consider the needs of Philadelphia, the surrounding region, and Pennsylvania, the reduced funding levels and the implied movement of funds away from urban areas are of grave concern to me.

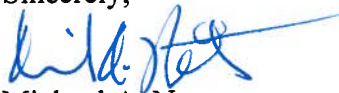
While much of the recent debate in Washington has focused on the national deficit, there is a mounting infrastructure deficit that affects both America's largest cities and smallest towns. Mayors, governors, and county commissioners see the infrastructure deficit everyday in the structurally deficient bridges our citizen ride across, the congested highways that snarl commerce and the transit systems that struggle to meet rider demand. The infrastructure deficit costs the nation in safety and economic efficiency. The decline of America's infrastructure puts our cities, regions and nation at global disadvantage, as we compete for private sector investment and jobs. Bipartisan commissions at every level of government and panels of engineering experts unanimously agree that America's infrastructure is in an unacceptable state of disrepair and decline. The reductions in funding, like the proposed \$3.3 billion cut in Federal support to Pennsylvania cannot be made up by new efficiencies or leveraging opportunities. These cuts will delay critical repairs and add to our national infrastructure investment deficit. Just like the Federal debt, a bill for the infrastructure deficit will come due. Investments in infrastructure: create jobs that cannot be outsourced, have among the most powerful multiplier effects of government spending and can catalyze lasting economic development. Now is the time to invest.

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The framework includes a suggestion that “the percentage of available formula funds for transit programs that benefit suburban and rural areas be increased.” There is no doubt that the transit needs of America’s suburbs and rural areas are growing, with increasing gas prices and an aging population. These needs should not be met by a shift in funding away from urban areas. The Federal investment in urban transit systems is the most cost efficient use of Federal funds for transit. The Federal investment in the Philadelphia region’s SEPTA system is leveraged 3:1 with state, local and passenger dollars and is critical to economic vitality of the entire region.

This week Senator Casey joined me to see the work Southeastern Pennsylvania is doing to efficiently invest Federal Transit Administration funds and the infrastructure challenges we face. I was pleased that you and your Republican held a listening session in our region. I welcome you and other committee members back to Philadelphia and our surrounding counties to see -on the ground- the challenges our roads and transit system face.

Sincerely,



Michael A. Nutter
Mayor

cc: Rep. Nick J. Rahall II, Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Rep. Bob Brady (PA-1)
Rep. Chaka Fattah (PA-2)
Rep. Allyson Schwartz (PA-13)
Rep. Mike Fitzpatrick (PA-8)
Rep. Bill Shuster (PA-9)
Rep. Patrick Meehan (PA-7)
Rep. Tim Holden (PA-17)
Rep. Jason Altmire (PA-4)
Sen. Robert Casey
Sen. Patrick Toomey
Sec. Ray LaHood