

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–1304

July 27, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Room S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear President Biden, Majority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, Senate Minority Leader McConnell, and House Minority Leader McCarthy:

As negotiations on the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework and the reconciliation package continue, we are writing to make clear how important it is that any final bill addresses two of the most significant challenges facing our nation today: **climate change** and **racial equity**. The transportation sector is the largest generator of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States; and a lack of safe, accessible, and affordable transportation has cut many Black and brown neighborhoods off from economic opportunity. To meet the moment, we need bold federal action, such as provided for in the INVEST Act, to modernize our transportation policy. Key to this is ensuring public transportation is incorporated and properly funded in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework and the reconciliation package.

In this context, 20 percent of **guaranteed** funding and contract authority from the Highway Trust Fund for transit is simply insufficient. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework and reconciliation package must include a baseline threshold for transit funding that provides a pathway for parity with the level of funding for roads and bridges. This is especially true now given that the economy is still recovering, and many Americans have been out of work. Further, there is a need to address \$105 billion in backlog state of repair needs and a need to modernize and electrify transit systems. This minimum 20 percent level of investment is a 40-year-old precedent that, frankly, is not up to 21st century needs and demands. For the past 40 years, transit has received only \$1 for every \$4 that has gone to highways. This imbalance has led to inadequate transit service, pushing consumers toward solo driving — a huge financial and climate burden especially to our most vulnerable, marginalized communities.

If we are serious about mitigating climate change and ensuring equitable access to economic opportunity, we cannot keep prioritizing highways over transit – and therefore the 20 percent status quo must go. To meet this country’s climate goals and avoid catastrophic consequences from climate change, transit funding must be significantly increased in the BIF to match the percentage provided in the House’s INVEST in America Act. At the same time, we must ensure there is a pathway for transit funding to reach parity with the level of funding for roads and bridges through reconciliation or alternative legislation. To ensure adequate funding, the House must have the opportunity to build on the Senate’s proposals and deliver the investments that match the scale of our communities’ needs.

There is also a need to craft a Surface Transportation Authorization within the Bipartisan Infrastructure bill to move the needle forward on rebuilding and modernizing America’s transportation infrastructure. However, we only move backwards if we abjectly fail to incorporate public transit provisions in the bill that at bare minimum, call for at least 20 percent of guaranteed funding from the Highway Trust Fund. The idea that we would retreat from that level — a level established under Ronald Reagan — when we are claiming to invest in economic recovery, address catastrophic global climate change, and finally address the racial inequities of our transportation system strains credulity.

We must do better. We must seize the moment through bold and transformative investments in public transportation. This once-in-a-generation chance to address climate change and racial inequities must not go to waste.

Sincerely,



Representative Henry C. “Hank” Johnson Jr.



Representative Jesús G. "Chuy" García

/s/
Ayanna Pressley
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/
Barbara Lee
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/
Jared Huffman
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/
Yvette D. Clarke
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/
Dina Titus
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/
Debbie Dingell
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/
Sheila Jackson Lee
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/
Cori Bush
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/
Jan Schakowsky
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/
Anthony G. Brown
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Julia Brownley
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Rashida Tlaib
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Bonnie Watson Coleman
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Jake Auchincloss
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Carolyn B. Maloney
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Nanette Diaz Barragán
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

André Carson
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Al Green
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Steve Cohen
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Ritchie Torres
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Emanuel Cleaver, II
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Gwen S. Moore
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Jerry McNerney
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Raúl M. Grijalva
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
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/s/

Frederica S. Wilson
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/s/

Earl Blumenauer
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/s/

Adriano Espaillat
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/s/

Alan Lowenthal
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/s/

Dwight Evans
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Albio Sires
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/s/

Eddie Bernice Johnson
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Seth Moulton
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Ilhan Omar
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Pramila Jayapal
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Thomas R. Suozzi
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Melanie Stansbury
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Jerrold Nadler
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Karen Bass
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Bennie Thompson
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Marie Newman
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Brendan F. Boyle
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Mark DeSaulnier
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Gregory W. Meeks
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Danny K. Davis
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Mark Pocan
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Brad Sherman
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Maxine Waters
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Marilyn Strickland
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Nydia M. Velázquez
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Grace Meng
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/s/

Brenda L. Lawrence
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Ro Khanna
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/s/

Nikema Williams
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Adam Smith
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Lisa Blunt Rochester
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

/s/

Stephen F. Lynch
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Cc: Sherrod Brown, Chair, Senate Committee on Banking, Committee on Housing and Urban Affairs
Maria Cantwell, Chair, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
Tom Carper, Chair, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
Peter DeFazio, Chair, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure