

**American Public Health Association ♦ National Wildlife Federation ♦ Sierra Club
Natural Resources Defense Council ♦ Environmental Defense Fund ♦ Safe Climate Campaign
Environmental Law and Policy Center ♦ Surface Transportation Policy Project
Union of Concerned Scientists ♦ Transportation For America ♦ Ecology Center
Conservation Law Foundation ♦ Safe Routes to School National Partnership
Friends of the Earth ♦ U.S. Public Interest Research Group ♦ 2020 Vision
Housing Preservation Project ♦ Reconnecting America ♦ Anchorage Citizens Coalition
AFL-CIO/CLC ♦ Alaska Center for Public Policy ♦ America Bikes
Michigan Environmental Council ♦ Environment and Energy Study Institute**

December 19, 2008

Dear Member,

Stimulating the economy is a top priority for the nation, and like most Americans we favor expeditious enactment of a recovery package. We are grateful that the President-elect's statements about not "just throw[ing] money at the problem" and measuring results including "the energy we save" signal a commitment to assemble a package that is both fast and smart. Consequently, a commonsense principle should underpin any economic recovery bill: Investment of public funds should guarantee public benefits.

First, repair and maintenance projects for existing capacity, as well as transit operating grants, should move forward rapidly, addressing public concerns about crumbling roads, bridges, and transit systems and putting people to work making repairs. Second, any new capacity investments should prioritize fuel-efficient, low-carbon, and health-enhancing alternatives (rail, bus, bicycle and pedestrian projects). Such a balanced package will stir up economic activity in the short run and make a downpayment on a clean, healthy, and secure energy future.

We are deeply concerned that the package will include a push for new road projects that will undermine critical oil savings and global warming goals. The priorities identified above create more jobs than new roads. Few state transportation department project wish lists have even been released to the public, a troubling lack of transparency when making a bid for billions of public dollars. And without careful targeting of resources, the package will yield fewer jobs and benefits than could otherwise have been delivered. Several of the lists that we have been able to access largely omit public transportation, which research shows usually creates more jobs per dollar invested than new road construction.

Benefits should accrue proportionally to those areas that host most of the public and the nation's economic activity. Two-thirds of our population and three-quarters of economic activity is located in metropolitan regions. Metropolitan areas are the engines of our prosperity, and they rely on well-functioning public transportation systems – including complementary bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure -- as well as a well-maintained road and bridge network.

A package should also guarantee the public benefit of increased energy security. America's modest public transportation, biking and walking networks save about 237,000 barrels of oil a day. The nation must build on this foundation, thereby contributing the President-elect's laudable commitment to save as much oil as we import from the Middle East and Venezuela in ten years (about 3.5 million barrels a day). The recovery package offers a golden opportunity to do so, but only if shoring up existing transit service – stretched due to recent ridership increases – and enhancing the network is on par with highway investments in the bill.

A package must also contribute to the President-elect's commitment to slash global warming pollution 80 percent by 2050. By saving oil, public transportation investments make up an important component of any climate action plan. On the other hand, in the course of a 50-year life span one mile of single-lane new

highway construction, when combined with routine maintenance and added traffic, spews more than 100,000 tons of heat-trapping carbon dioxide. Locking in higher emissions in this way exacerbates our global warming challenge.

We look forward working with you on a recovery package that provides short-term stimulus while making a downpayment on a clean, healthy, and secure energy future.

Sincerely,

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