

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 20, 2019

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 410
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Dirksen Senate Office Building, Room 456
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

Thank you for your commitment to develop legislation that will make critical investments in our nation's surface transportation infrastructure. These investments will improve transportation networks, provide long-term certainty to the agencies that build and operate our nation's infrastructure, and support the people and businesses that rely on them. We write today because it is essential that the legislation takes meaningful steps to address the transportation sectors' contribution to climate change and makes necessary long-term investments to ensure our nation's infrastructure is more resilient to the variety of hazards posed by future climate conditions.

The transportation sector is now the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in our economy. Electricity generation and the industrial and residential sectors have reduced emissions in recent years, yet transportation-related emissions continue to increase. Reducing emissions from transportation is imperative if we are serious about addressing climate change. The state, local, and tribal agencies that plan, build, and operate our transportation networks must be given the guidance and funding necessary to reduce the carbon-intensiveness of the transportation sector.

We can reduce vehicle emissions, 90 percent of which are powered by petroleum-based fuels today, by promoting electric and hydrogen-fuel cell powered vehicles. This will require investing in the charging and fueling infrastructure necessary to ensure consumers and businesses have access to reliable power sources for their vehicles, wherever they travel. The National Renewable Energy Laboratory estimates that 25,000 additional fast-charging stations are needed to meet demand by 2030 at an estimated cost of \$5 billion. Therefore, the reauthorization bill should provide at least \$500 million per year from the Highway Trust Fund for the installation of electric vehicle charging stations and hydrogen fueling infrastructure along designated clean corridors across the National Highway System with cost-sharing to begin to close this gap. The corridors that could support public access to electric and hydrogen fueling infrastructure include corridors that are already designated in more than forty-four states and the District of Columbia; providing funding to help build and operate charging and fueling infrastructure along identified clean corridors is a natural next step in giving Americans a fuel choice on our nation's roadways.

We can further reduce emissions from the transportation sector by encouraging more affordable, efficient modes of travel including biking and walking, as well as rail and public transit. We support mandatory funding for climate incentives of at least \$1 billion per year to implement emissions-reducing transportation plans. Through a combination of local performance targets, robust incentives, and funding flexibility for active transportation and transit, the reauthorization bill can support efforts by state, tribal, and local governments to reduce their carbon footprints.

Beyond addressing our transportation carbon emissions, we must also take steps to protect our nation's infrastructure against damage from extreme weather events. We know our climate is and will continue changing, and that we will face more sea level rise and flooding, extreme heat, wildfires, and other natural hazards. According to the recently issued Fourth National Climate Assessment, the changing climate will have a significant effect on our nation's roadways, bridges, and railways across the country. We therefore request contract authority in the bill of at least \$1.5 billion per year to build out resilient infrastructure and promote long-term thinking about the resilience of new and existing infrastructure assets, including siting projects appropriately and using designs and materials that can withstand the impacts of climate change.


Through better planning, combined with prudent, targeted investments in resilience improvements, states, tribes, and local communities can reduce their climate vulnerability. The federal government should provide funding to state and local agencies that will incentivize greater coordination and encourage investments in infrastructure that is resilient to climate disruption. In addition, the federal government must provide better guidance on how to forecast the effects of a changing climate so that communities can better integrate that understanding into long-term plans and investment decisions. It is also important to recognize that carbon pollution and climate events such as heat waves and floods have had a disproportionately negative impact on low-income, disadvantaged, and minority communities. These communities often have limited resources to mitigate the wide array of climate-related health and environmental impacts. Funds should be dedicated to reverse the effects of these conditions and investments should be committed to ensure these communities are able to adapt to an ever-changing environment.

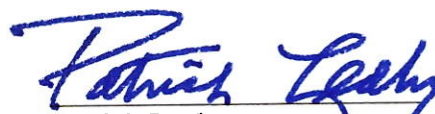
Investing in a cleaner, more resilient transportation system should not come at the expense of working people. We must continue to make investments that allow our workforce to remain competitive as transportation technologies advance. In addition, any federal infrastructure funding should adhere to basic principles including prevailing wage provisions, Buy America protections, and provisions to strengthen the participation of minority- and women-owned firms.


Combatting the effects of a changing climate presents an existential crisis to our and future generations, and federal agencies must be partners in addressing it. Agencies should utilize existing authorities and environmental protection statutes to address climate change. Previous surface transportation bills included streamlining provisions to get highway projects built more quickly. We should not limit agencies' ability to evaluate the impacts of federal actions on the human and natural environment. While federal agency efficiency should always be a goal, it should not come at the cost of appropriate consideration of environmental and climate impacts.


Thank you for your consideration of these priorities.

Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator


Patty Murray
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



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Debbie Stabenow
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Robert Menendez
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Bernard Sanders
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Robert P. Casey, Jr.
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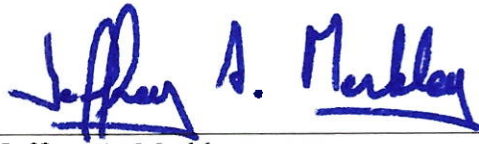

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator


Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator

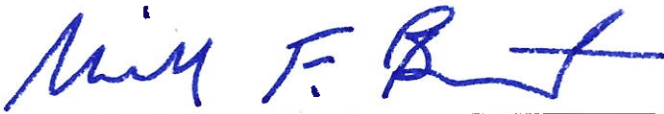

Tom Udall
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Jeanne Shaheen
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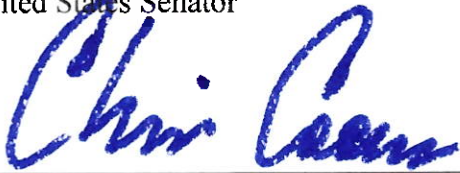
Jeffrey A. Merkley
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Michael F. Bennet
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Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



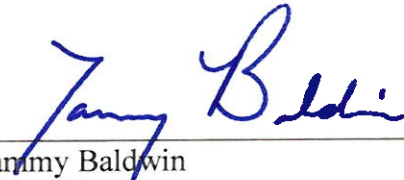
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



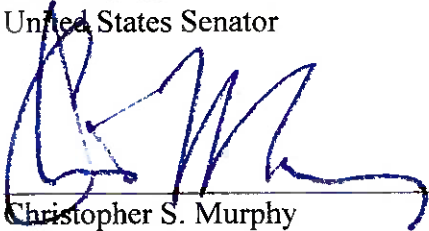
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



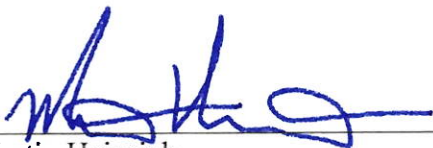
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



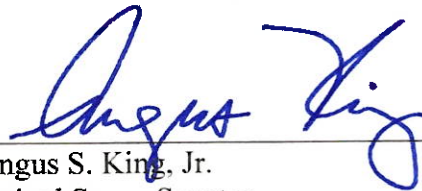
Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



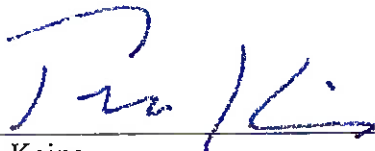
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



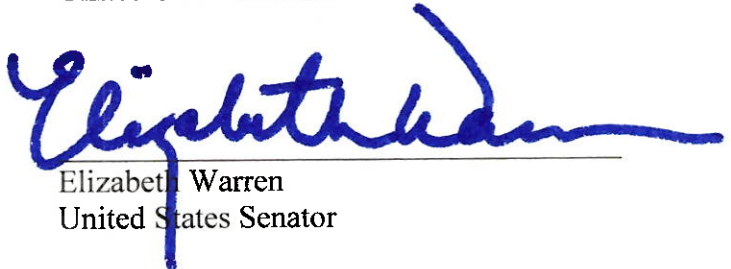
Martin Heinrich
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Angus S. King, Jr.
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Tim Kaine
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Elizabeth Warren
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Jacky Rosen

Jacky Rosen
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