

Coalition for Smarter Growth, 1000 Friends of Maryland, Piedmont Environmental Council, Virginia Conservation Network, Shenandoah Valley Network, Community Research, Friends of the Earth, Maryland Alliance for Greenway Improvement and Conservation, Scenic Virginia, Audubon Naturalist Society, West/Rhode Riverkeeper, Montgomery Countryside Alliance, Action Committee For Transit, Anacostia Watershed Society, Partnership for Smarter Growth, Chesapeake Climate Action Network, Clean Water Action, Virginia Association of Railway Patrons, Maryland Chapter of Sierra Club, Virginia League of Conservation Voters, Amalgamated Transit Union Local 689

Joint Statement in Support of a Fix-it-First, Jobs First, and Sustainable Stimulus

Dear Senators Mikulski and Cardin

The undersigned groups have been involved for many years in promoting, supporting and implementing fiscally and environmentally sustainable land use, transportation and environmental policies. We hereby express our core concerns and recommendations for the stimulus bill before the Senate:

- 1) We **strongly oppose** the proposed amendments by Senator Bond which would cut intercity rail and competitive multimodal funding and transfer those funds to highways.
- 2) We **continue to strongly oppose** a \$50 billion highways-only amendment proposed by Senator Inhofe, but understand Senator Boxer is working to make changes to this amendment. We **strongly support** a fix-it-first (maintenance and repair) requirement for the funding, a priority for transit, rail, and local roads, and a process by which states must work with local communities to set their transportation priorities. We need a real change in state DOT priorities.
- 3) We **support** “fix-it-first” and “jobs first” as core principles, meaning that maintenance, repair and operations of roads, bridges, transit, and water and sewer systems should be the first and largest priority for funding. This includes our **support** for transit operating costs because transit agencies are being forced to cut staff and service despite record transit ridership.
- 4) We **support** priority investment in repair and upgrade of our water and sewer systems to protect public health, the water quality of our rivers, streams and the Chesapeake Bay, and to support continued revitalization of our cities and towns.
- 5) We **support** energy efficiency and community development block grants.
- 6) We **support** funding for new buses and railcars to meet rising demand for transit service.
- 7) We **support** substantial transit capital and intercity rail funding provided it is tied to local commitment to design and implement transit-oriented development at the stations.
- 8) We **support** requirements for local community input and input by local officials to determine the priority allocations for the general transportation funds.
- 9) We **support** a requirement that the states and regions conduct a fundamental reevaluation of transportation project lists -- before states can spend their federal capital funds -- to account for rising energy prices, climate change and reduced long-term transportation infrastructure revenues.

The stimulus, especially the infrastructure portions, cannot be about business as usual. We can no longer afford to fuel inefficient patterns of development with new infrastructure and not repair what we've already built. Prime examples are our decaying bridges and exploding water mains. By maintaining what we have already built we can also support development where we already have infrastructure. Furthermore, in a world of higher energy prices and climate change we need to reduce the energy use, emissions, and oil dependency of our transportation sector. This requires priority investments in transit and local "complete streets" supporting bicyclists and pedestrians, linked with more compact and efficient patterns of development.

Due to the speed with which the bill is moving we are providing phone numbers in lieu of signature for verification purposes. Additional groups are expected to sign on tomorrow.

Sincerely,



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