

November 28, 2007

The Honorable Mary Peters  
Chairperson, National Surface Transportation Policy  
and Revenue Study Commission  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation  
400 7th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20590

Mr. Jack Schenendorf  
Vice Chairman, National Surface Transportation  
Policy and Revenue Study Commission  
Of Counsel, Covington & Burling LLP  
1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004-2401

Dear Secretary Peters and Vice-Chairman Schenendorf,

On behalf of the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), I applaud your efforts on the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission in determining the condition and future needs of the nation's surface transportation system, as well as alternative funding solutions that will sustain and improve our country's multimodal transportation system. Please consider NARC and its nationwide membership a resource for the Commission.

NARC, representing local elected officials, Councils of Government (COGs) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), serves as the national voice for regionalism – advocating regional cooperation as the most effective way to address community planning, development and infrastructure issues. COGs and MPOs are responsible for billions of dollars in transportation planning and programming each year, coordinating regional projects and operations throughout the country.

As it now stands, our country's transportation system is at a crossroads. Purchasing power and funds continue to dwindle as infrastructure needs for basic maintenance and demands for increased capacity overwhelm an aging system. Infrastructure investments are needed to foster continued community prosperity and safety. Furthermore, regional agencies must receive adequate funding, as well as the necessary authority to maintain and improve critical infrastructure. Operating on an inefficient transportation system will only diminish our ability to compete in a global marketplace, sustain jobs, and strengthen our local and national economies. With the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) predicted to be insolvent by 2009, it is urgent that the Commission work with NARC and its members to determine a national financing plan that will prevent deficiencies and improve inter and intra state infrastructure.

NARC supports the existence and continued operations of MPOs in metropolitan planning and programming, as well as rural planning organizations (RPOs) for rural planning. However, there are serious concerns about negative impacts on MPOs and the metropolitan planning process due to a lack of federal planning funds, their primary financial support, from forthcoming HTF shortfalls. Our declining ability to plan the safest and most effective transportation system will suffocate infrastructure capacity, maintenance, and improvements in our nation's regions.

Significant attention and additional funding for transportation at all levels of government are required to improve the safety, environment, interconnectivity and commerce of our regions and nation as a whole. We appreciate your dedication and leadership to these important issues. Please share the enclosed information with your fellow commissioners and let us know if you need further details on NARC. We offer our assistance and would appreciate an opportunity to discuss some of NARC's SAFETEA-LU reauthorization concerns and financing solutions. Feel free to contact me at any time at 202.986.1032, x.216 or [fred@narc.org](mailto:fred@narc.org). Thank you.

Sincerely,



Fred Abousleman  
Executive Director

Cc: Jack Wells, Chief Economist, U.S. Department of Transportation