

October 21, 2015

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster:

I commend you for developing bipartisan legislation that would reauthorize the federal surface transportation program through FY 2021. This six-year “Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015,” or STRRA, would provide states and the transportation construction industry with more certainty about future highway and public transportation investments than has been seen since the last long-term bill expired in 2009.

While ending the cycle of temporary extensions and short-term authorization bills is a significant accomplishment, the STRRA would also establish a number of key reforms that would improve the effectiveness of these programs. ARTBA strongly supports the bill’s project delivery provisions—particularly the strengthening of the U.S. Department of Transportation’s “lead agency” status, increased focus on roadway infrastructure safety, and requirements to improve the transparency of how federal highway funds are utilized and the benefits that accrue from these investments in each state. Demonstrating to the American public the value they receive from federal surface transportation investments and that these resources are used in the most efficient manner possible is a critical step to overcoming the political challenges of funding these programs in the long-term.

ARTBA has long called for the creation of a dedicated freight program to underscore the clear responsibility of the federal government for maintaining and improving a national surface transportation network. We are pleased the STRRA recognizes this unmet need through the creation of the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects Program. We are concerned, however, this program could effectively dilute already constrained highway investment levels by allowing up to \$500 million to be awarded to freight rail projects. In addition to creating a false choice between the need to support highway-related freight projects and freight rail projects, this provision would establish a precedent that Highway Trust Fund resources should be available for all modes of transportation projects that have freight benefits.

It is no secret the highway and public transportation investment levels that would be provided by the STRRA are well below the documented needs of the nation's surface transportation network. It is also no secret the Highway Trust Fund's permanent revenue shortfall is a major impediment to delivering the investment levels needed by the U.S. economy and the travelling public. We urge you to support growing the STRRA investment levels as the reauthorization process goes forward and to include a provision in any final reauthorization bill that would establish a detailed process with deadlines and consequences for Congress to finally develop a permanent Highway Trust Fund revenue solution.

Thank you for your leadership in advancing the surface transportation reauthorization process and I encourage all members of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee to support approval of the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "T. Peter Ruane". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

T. Peter Ruane
President & CEO