



# Chickaloon Village Traditional Council (Nay'dini'aa Na')

Chief Gary Harrison,  
*Chairman*

Rick Harrison,  
*Vice-Chairman*

Penny Westing,  
*Secretary/Elder*

Albert Harrison,  
*Treasurer/Elder*

Doug Wade,  
*Elder Member*

Shawna Larson,  
*Member*

Kari Shaginoff,  
*Member*

Lisa Wade,  
*Member*

Gary Hay,  
*Executive Director*

October 19, 2015

The Honorable Bill Shuster  
Chairman  
Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure  
2251 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-6256  
Attn: Chris Bertram, Staff Director  
[christopher.bertram@mail.house.gov](mailto:christopher.bertram@mail.house.gov)

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure  
2251 Rayburn House Office Building  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-6256  
Attn: Kathy Dedrick, Staff Director  
[kathy.dedrick@mail.house.gov](mailto:kathy.dedrick@mail.house.gov)

Dear Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio,

We congratulate you and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for introducing the "Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015 (STRRA)." You are to be commended for developing a bipartisan multi-year highway bill to advance national transportation priorities. We especially appreciate the inclusion transportation programs important to tribes, including the Tribal Transportation Self-Governance Program. Given the backlog of transportation projects we face on our reservation and the unacceptably high rate of motor vehicle and pedestrian fatalities among Native Americans, especially among tribal youth, we urge that the Committee consider including additional funding authority for the Tribal Transportation Program and the Tribal Transit Program and consider other Tribal Transportation Unity Caucus (TTUC) amendments we and other tribes support when you markup the legislation on October 22<sup>nd</sup>. We respectfully ask that, at a minimum, the Committee:

- Augment STRRA's Sec. 1101(a)(3)(A) funding authorization levels to match the Senate TIRES Act's funding for the Tribal Transportation Program (TTP). The House measure would currently authorize \$43 million less for the TTP over the FY 2016 through FY 2021 authorization period than the Senate TIRES Act (S.

1776) – favorably reported out of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs by Chairman Barrasso. The \$43 million in additional funding we seek for the Tribal Transportation Program represents one-tenth of one percent of the \$38.41 billion the Committee authorizes for the Federal-Aid Highway Program for FY 2016. The House bill would also, in all likelihood, set the Tribal Transit Program authorized funding level at the MAP-21 level (\$30 million) annually through Fiscal Year 2021, when tribal transit needs are increasing dramatically each year and the Senate DRIVE Act (H.R. 22) increased tribal transit funding to \$35 million annually. Tribes seek parity with States if we are to be capable transportation stakeholders;

- Fund the Tribal High Priority Project (HPP) out of the Highway Trust Fund. Since MAP-21 was enacted in 2012, Congress has failed to appropriate any funds from the general fund of the Treasury for this very important tribal program that in the past had supplemented limited Tribal Transportation Program “tribal shares.” Prior to MAP-21, the Tribal HPP Program was funded out of HTF. We ask you to restore funding for this program out of the Fund;
- Restore the Obligation Limitation Deduction Exemption that once existed for the IRR (now Tribal Transportation) Program. If the Committee cannot see fit to increase authorized funding levels for the Tribal Transportation Program, the Committee should limit the harm to the Program caused by the operation of the obligation limitation deduction. Since FY 2005, more than \$320 million in appropriated funds for the IRR and Tribal Transportation Program has been withdrawn from use by tribes by operation of the obligation limitation deduction. With some of the worst road conditions in the country, high unemployment and the worst motor vehicle fatality rates of any group in the country, we call on the people’s House and its Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to stem the loss of much needed federal assistance for tribal transportation and highway safety needs.

Augmenting and protecting the authorized funding levels for the Tribal Transportation Program and Tribal Transit Program will also help us attract private resources. Together, the combination of Tribal-State-Federal and private investment in tribal transportation projects will make a big difference over the next six years.

Throughout Indian country, and especially on our reservation, federal appropriations make the difference between the success and failure of our tribal initiatives, which in turn determine whether economic and social conditions on our reservation improve or deteriorate. We urge the Committee and you, as its leaders, to help us bring our transportation infrastructure into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, create local jobs and improve the safety of our transportation systems for all users.

Thank you for considering our request.

May Creator Guide Our Footsteps,

