



American Bus Association

May 19, 2026

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
1135 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Rouzer
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Highways and
Transit
2333 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
House Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on Highways and
Transit
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Graves, Ranking Member Larsen, Chairman Rouzer, and Ranking Member Norton:

On behalf of the American Bus Association (ABA) and the private motorcoach and group travel industry, we write to express our strong support for the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's surface transportation reauthorization proposal, the BUILD America 250 Act. The legislation contains several important provisions that recognize the essential role private motorcoach operators play in national mobility, tourism, emergency response, rural transportation, and economic development.

ABA appreciates the Committee's work to include long-standing industry priorities that improve operational fairness, strengthen rural intercity transportation, and ensure private operators are treated more equitably within federal transportation policy.

In particular, we strongly support provisions that:

- Maintain the existing federal motorcoach fuel tax rebate, which provides meaningful savings for operators and helps preserve service, particularly for small and mid-sized companies;
- Establish toll parity for charter buses, ensuring private operators receive equal treatment with publicly operated transit systems on toll facilities;
- Clarify HOV lane access for private motorcoaches, improving travel times, reliability, and operational efficiency in congested corridors;
- Improve enforcement timelines for charter bus rule violations by establishing a 120-day deadline for DOT determinations;
- Strengthen reasonable access protections for federally funded transit facilities and terminals, including requiring transit agencies to respond to access requests within 90 days;
- Expand support for rural intercity bus infrastructure projects serving underserved communities and interstate routes; and
- Preserve the current federal motorcoach insurance minimum requirements, avoiding unnecessary cost increases that could disproportionately harm smaller operators and reduce service availability in rural areas.

We also appreciate the Committee's attention to strengthening enforcement against unsafe and noncompliant operators, including improvements to the federal complaint system, review of FMCSA's New Entrant Safety Assurance Program, and provisions addressing shell companies, reincarnated carriers, and other bad actors that undermine safety and fair competition within the industry.

Additionally, ABA strongly supports Section 5203, which would expand the Pre-Employment Screening Program (PSP) and improve the DataQs system. Accurate, transparent, and timely federal safety data is critical for responsible motor carriers. Improvements to PSP and DataQs will help carriers identify and resolve inaccurate information more efficiently, improve confidence in the regulatory process, and strengthen overall highway safety.

ABA also appreciates the opportunity to submit several recommendations to strengthen the bill and ensure the final legislation fully reflects the operational realities and policy needs of the private motorcoach industry. Included below are several recommended changes, clarifications, and additional provisions ABA believes would improve implementation and ensure private motorcoach operators are appropriately represented throughout the bill's programs, rulemakings, and federal transportation policies.

Recommended Additions and Clarifications

Motorcoach Idling and Federal Safety Preemption

ABA encourages the Committee to advance a targeted federal solution, potentially as a new section in Title V, Subtitle C, Commercial Motor Vehicle Safety, ensuring local idling restrictions do not penalize private motorcoach operators for activities required to safely transport passengers and comply with federal safety obligations. Motorcoaches often must idle to conduct federally required safety inspections, operate air brake and accessibility systems, maintain safe cabin temperatures and ventilation, and support passenger boarding and unloading activities. ABA believes a practical federal preemption standard of 15 minutes—based on EPA model state idling law guidance—is necessary to prevent inconsistent local enforcement from interfering with passenger safety, accessibility compliance, and operational reliability.

Major Event Transportation and Charter Service Protections

ABA recommends clarifying that nothing in Section 7104 related to major international sporting event transportation assistance exempts recipients, subrecipients, planning activities, bus pooling arrangements, or transportation services from existing federal charter service protections under 49 U.S.C. § 5323(d) and 49 C.F.R. Part 604. As major event transportation planning expands, it is important to ensure federally funded activities do not unintentionally undermine private charter operators or create unfair competition with publicly subsidized entities.

Strengthening Enforcement of Bus Terminal Access Protections

While ABA strongly supports the bill's improvements to "reasonable access" requirements for federally funded transportation facilities in Section 3013, we encourage the Committee to consider stronger enforcement mechanisms to ensure these protections are meaningful in practice. ABA supports exploring additional language requiring federally funded bus terminals and transportation facilities to provide over-the-road buses access at the same "rates, terms, and conditions" as public transportation buses. Additional enforcement tools could also help ensure private operators are not subject to unreasonable denials, excessive fees, or discriminatory conditions.

Forward-Visibility Safety Standards

ABA encourages the Committee to ensure the forward-visibility safety standard for newly manufactured buses in Section 4013 is appropriately tailored to over-the-road motorcoaches and based on operational realities and relevant safety data. Current

discussions surrounding forward-visibility standards are largely focused on public transit buses operating in dense urban environments, and transit-focused design requirements may not be appropriate for private motorcoach operations.

Commercial Motor Vehicle Workforce Development

ABA recommends clarifying that the commercial motor vehicle workforce development program created under Section 5407 applies equally to the passenger commercial motor vehicle workforce, including private motorcoach drivers, passenger-endorsement CDL training programs, motorcoach mechanics, and small passenger carrier operators. As currently drafted, the section appears heavily focused on trucking and freight movement without clearly recognizing the workforce needs of the passenger motorcoach industry. Clarifying eligibility would help ensure workforce grants, training partnerships, and DOT implementation guidance support motorcoach driver recruitment, passenger endorsement training, and maintenance workforce development.

Emergency Relief Working Group Representation

ABA encourages the Committee to ensure that private transportation providers, including private motorcoach operators, are represented within the Emergency Relief Working Group established under Section 1318. Motorcoaches play an essential role in emergency response, evacuation operations, and disaster recovery by moving large groups of people quickly and safely. Their operational expertise should be incorporated into future federal emergency transportation planning and coordination efforts.

Autonomous Vehicle Rulemaking Representation

ABA recommends explicitly including private passenger motorcoach operators within the autonomous commercial motor vehicle rulemaking framework and advisory process established under Subtitle E and Section 5402. Current language includes a broad range of stakeholders but does not specifically reference private charter or intercity bus operators. Passenger transportation presents unique operational and safety considerations that differ significantly from freight transportation and should be represented in any future autonomous vehicle regulatory structure.

Onboard Human Operator Requirements for Autonomous Motorcoaches

ABA also encourages the Committee to strengthen Section 5402 by ensuring passenger transportation by motorcoach is included within onboard human-operator requirements for autonomous commercial motor vehicles, or at minimum requiring DOT to make a specific safety determination before fully driverless

passenger motorcoach operations are permitted. Passenger-carrying operations involve unique responsibilities related to emergency response, evacuations, ADA accessibility, onboard security, baggage handling, and passenger assistance that warrant additional safeguards.

We appreciate your leadership and your recognition of the private motorcoach industry's important role in connecting communities, supporting tourism and conventions, moving millions of passengers safely each year, and providing critical transportation services during emergencies and major national events.

Thank you for your consideration and continued engagement with the private motorcoach industry. ABA looks forward to working with the Committee throughout the reauthorization process and advancing policies that strengthen mobility, safety, and fair competition for private passenger carriers nationwide.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Callie Hoyt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Callie Hoyt

Senior Vice President of Public Affairs & Government Relations
American Bus Association