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ATM Coalition to Congress: Long-Term Bill Must Follow Highway Trust Fund Hearings

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Americans for Transportation Mobility (ATM) Coalition leaders reacted to Congressional hearings held by the House Ways & Means and Senate Finance Committees on federal Highway Trust Fund funding options with cautious optimism. Although none of the coalition members were invited to testify, they have repeatedly and clearly stated the [case](#) on the need for long-term Congressional action.

“The hearings were a positive step, but must yield action on the funding to support a long-term highway, public transit, and highway safety bill,” said ATM Vice President Janet Kavinoky. “The chronic underfunding of the Trust Fund is an issue that impacts every single American consumer and business.”

Because of lack of support for the HTF, [seven states have delayed or canceled projects valued at \\$1.63 billion; a total of 19 states have expressed concerns about the feasibility of future transportation projects](#). Kavinoky said in order re-instate certainty and confidence among state transportation officials nationwide, it is critical for Congress to determine how to pay for maintaining—and ideally increasing—federal assistance to state and local governments.

“There has been no shortage of hearings, reports, conferences and discussions on the topic,” said American Public Transit Association (APTA) President and CEO Michael Melaniphy. “And nearly all of them conclude that a long-term bill is in the best interest of Americans and American business.”

“The federal government plays an [important role](#) in transportation—a role that goes all the way back to the founding of the country,” said American Society of Civil Engineers Executive Director Thomas W. Smith III, ENV SP, CAE, F.ASCE. “The nation—and the federal government—needs to invest more in maintaining, modernizing, and expanding transportation infrastructure or [risk economic consequences](#).”

“Our inability to properly fund needed upgrades to our aging transportation systems is costing commuters in lost time and needless vehicle repairs and the economy in lost productivity and delayed shipments,” said Associated General Contractors of America (AGC) CEO Stephen E. Sandherr. “The best way to save Americans money and boost our economy is to make the investments needed to cut traffic, improve road conditions and keep our bridges safe.”

“The most obvious solution would be to modestly adjust the federal surtax on gasoline and diesel to make up for its diminished buying power when it was last adjusted in 1993,” said Association of Equipment Manufacturers (AEM) President Dennis Slater. “The gas tax is a straightforward user fee espoused by no less a conservative than President Ronald Reagan. It remains the most

simple and straightforward way to assure that those who incur use of our roads pay for their maintenance.”

Time is running out under the current extension for Congress to create, consider and pass long-term legislation that meets the needs of American communities across the country. “By long-term solution, we do not mean a four- to six-year patch,” said American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA) Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer Bill Toohey. “That will just leave us facing another \$16 billion a year-plus funding cliff at the end of the next authorization. We want a sustainable funding solution to put this critical national program back on solid footing for the next decade.”

Kavinoky said, “Americans and American businesses must seize the opportunity with the upcoming Congressional recess June 29-July 2 to tell their members of Congress directly, no more delays, no more borrowing. “We need action now that will reduce congestion and save lives through modernizing U.S. transportation infrastructure.”

The Americans for Transportation Mobility Coalition is a collaborative effort by business, labor, transportation stakeholders and concerned citizens to advocate for improved and increased federal investment in the nation’s aging and overburdened transportation system. The coalition believes the deterioration of the nation’s transportation system undermines the economy, jeopardizes our safety, threatens our quality of life, and harms the environment.

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