



Potomac and Rappahannock
Transportation Commission

14700 Potomac Mills Road
Woodbridge, VA 22192

February 3, 2012

The Honorable Rob Wittman
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Wittman,

On behalf of the Potomac and Rappahannock Transportation Commission (PRTC) and its member governments, I write to express strong opposition to the proposal made by the House Committee on Ways and Means calling for the portion of the current motor fuels tax now dedicated to transit investments to be used instead for other surface transportation programs.

Because the House Committee on Ways and Means is scheduled to mark up its proposed funding measure today (February 3rd), it remains to be seen whether this particular proposal is retained. Perhaps the Committee will be persuaded by the public outcry about the proposal to jettison it but, because the House Transportation and Infrastructure transportation reauthorization bill and its companion funding measure are now proceeding so quickly, PRTC believes it doesn't have the luxury of awaiting the outcome before urging you to spurn this proposal if it is retained in the funding measure presented to the full House.

Under current law, 2.86 cents of the existing motor fuels tax is dedicated to transit investment. It has been that way for nearly 30 years, because of a strong conviction by the Congress and a succession of both Republican and Democratic Presidents that transit is an integral and indispensable part of the surface transportation system. These tax revenues will generate an estimated \$25 billion over the 5 year period covered by the House bill and would support nearly 50 percent of the funds authorized for transit investment in the bill. These revenues are a dependable and predictable source of funding for transit investment and should remain dedicated to public transportation.

New funding sources will be required to fully fund both transit and highway investment authorized under the bill. These new funding sources should be used to help support authorized funding that cannot be paid for with existing dedicated revenues, instead of redirecting funding away from existing purposes. Public transportation relies on long-term stable funding in order to carry out long term planning and major construction projects that employ thousands of people in the private sector. While PRTC has no opinion on what sources of funds would be most appropriate for a long-term, stable funding package for transit and other surface transportation purposes, diversion of the 2.86 cents dedicated to transit for other surface transportation purposes is clearly not an acceptable solution.

Sincerely,

Michael C. May
Chairman

cc: PRTC Commissioners
PRTC Executive Director

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