



Association for Commuter Transportation
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An Open Letter to the Members of the 110th Congress

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader of the Senate
Senate of the United States
S-21, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
United States House of Representatives
H-232, US Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Majority Leader & Madam Speaker:

As the House of Representatives prepares to vote on a major infrastructure spending and economic stimulus bill to fund needed transit services, road improvements and bridge repairs, a significant opportunity exists to include strategies (incentives and enablers) for the voluntary reduction of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) which would appeal to both suburbanites and exurbanites.

This opportunity comes at a time when a convergence of issues is shaking our economy and national security.

- America's dependence on foreign oil makes vulnerable the country's economic and military security and our nation must continue to address this fundamental risk.
- Oil just topped \$109 per barrel for the first time, and Americans are now spending ~6% of their disposable income on energy (most of which for transportation). This certainly doesn't explain the recession, but it surely adds to the problem.
- The EPA has issued new standards to control smog that scientists and environmental organizations are criticizing for not going far enough. According to the New York Times, 345 counties currently violate the new standards EPA has set to reduce smog and clean up the air. EPA's action offers a stark reminder that, in the absence of meaningful regulations, consumer action is critical if we're going to reduce air pollution both now and in the future.
- In a February 2008 interview, the head of the Energy Security Leadership Council, a group eight corporate executives and eight retired military officers advocating greater American energy independence, stated "... a lot of analysts think that as much as 40% of the entire US military budget can be attributed to protecting the oil trade." Those funds could go a long way towards addressing our national infrastructure crisis...

- Because of heavy congestion and rising fuel prices, the total logistics cost to American businesses—the expense of managing, moving, and storing goods—rose to 10 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2006. According to the 2007 Urban Mobility Report, drivers in metropolitan areas in 2005 wasted 2.9 billion gallons of fuel, enough to fill 58 supertankers. The combined “congestion cost” was a staggering \$78 billion.

In the passage of last year’s “Energy Bill,” Congress took significant steps to address these challenges in the long-term by promoting the development of alternative fuels, and reducing oil consumption by increasing CAFE standards for automobiles and light trucks. In the short term, however, our country remains precariously-balanced on a two-legged stool... one which argues for concerted action to enact a national energy conservation strategy designed to reduce oil dependence in the short-term.

Some say the public and Congress would not accept forced conservation... but my thirty years of experience in this arena tells me the commuting public and their employers will respond positively to new market incentives to stimulate energy conservation via VMT reduction.

We need your leadership across jurisdictions to bridge the gaps in the current committee structure, which would address these separate, but related issues... energy, transportation, air quality and tax.

We offer our assistance to the nation in its time of need, and to you in formulating a transportation-related response to our short-term energy and economic challenges.

Sincerely,



Jon Martz, President
Association for Commuter Transportation