



National Association of Regional Councils

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April 12, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
S-146A, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development
U.S. Senate
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development
U.S. Senate
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen Cochran and Collins and Ranking Members Mikulski and Reed:

On behalf of the members of the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), we are writing to express our support for two particularly important items for regions in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 transportation appropriations bill: the Capital Investment Grant program and the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program. Regional organizations bring public and private community partners together to strengthen economies and serve their citizens.

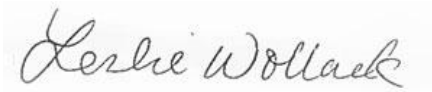
Public transit is vital to the regions our members serve, and it is essential that Congress fully fund the public transportation programs recently reauthorized by the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. Regions rely on transit for reducing congestion, increasing access, and providing convenient and economical transportation options for users in areas of all sizes. Through the New Starts, Small Starts, and Core Capacity programs, the grants provided to local regions are the primary federal investments in the construction and expansion of heavy rail, light rail, commuter rail, bus rapid transit, and ferryboat projects. Demand for transit continues to grow and the Capital Investment Grants allow the federal government to contribute to the expansion and growth of transit in our metropolitan regions. We urge you to fund these grants at the \$2.3 billion level included in the FAST Act.

The TIGER discretionary grant program is also important for regions, allowing them the opportunity to compete for funds for high-priority projects and giving their cities and counties the opportunity to do the same. The eighth round of funding under TIGER is currently underway, and it is important that Congress continue to fund this program. We support the Administration's

funding level for FY17 of \$1.25B. We also encourage that a portion of TIGER funds be set-aside specifically for planning purposes, as has been done in some previous funding rounds.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. If you have any questions concerning NARC's views, please contact Erich Zimmermann, Director of Transportation, at 202-618-5697 or erich@narc.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Leslie Wollack". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Leslie Wollack
Executive Director