



NARC

Building Regional Communities

National Association of Regional Councils

777 North Capitol Street, NE Suite 306

Washington, DC 20002

202.986.1032 (tel) 202.986.1038 (fax)

www.NARC.org

May 14, 2014

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairman
Senate Environment & Public Works Committee
U.S. Senate
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Vitter
Ranking Member
Senate Environment & Public Works Committee
U.S. Senate
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper
Chairman, Transportation & Infrastructure Subcommittee
Senate Environment & Public Works Committee
U.S. Senate
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso
Ranking Member, Transportation & Infrastructure Subcommittee
Senate Environment & Public Works Committee
U.S. Senate
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Messrs. Chairmen and Ranking Members:

On behalf of the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), representing regional planning organizations and their local elected officials nationwide, thank you for introducing the MAP-21 Reauthorization Bill. Our members support your efforts to begin the critical dialogue to ensure a multi-year authorization, and we share your aim to preserve the ability of our nation to invest in critical transportation infrastructure projects.

NARC looks forward to working with you and your Senate colleagues to develop policies and programs to support long-term planning for cities, counties and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs), and empower local governments through increased authority, funding and flexibility.

Specifically, NARC supports:

- Increasing local authority and funding through robust suballocation of programs, including the Surface Transportation Program (STP) and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). Such suballocation provides federal resources to local governments – who own and operate nearly 80 percent of America's highways and roads, over 50 percent our bridges, and 90 percent of the scheduled service transit. Local elected officials are closest to the citizens who use these transportation systems every day, and are in the best position to direct transportation investment decisions toward projects that will have the most 'bang for the buck.'
- Increasing metropolitan planning (PL) funding for MPOs of all sizes.
- Incorporating MPOs into freight planning and funding programs. The movement of goods is a regional issue and regions and metropolitan areas are crucial players in planning for and supporting efficient freight movement. MPOs around the country actively and successfully engage their private sector freight partners into their planning processes to address economic needs while assuring that their regions remain places where skilled workers want to live and where businesses can grow.
- Expediting project delivery while preserving environmental safeguards.

As the authorization process continues, we stand ready to work with you to help illustrate the benefits of transportation investments to local governments and MPOs. Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue, and for your efforts to ensure a bi-partisan approach to passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Joanna L. Turner
Executive Director

cc: Members of the U.S. Senate Environment & Public Works Committee