



## NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

*The Forum for America's Ideas*

**Curtis Bramble**  
*Senate President Pro Tempore*  
*Utah*  
*President, NCSL*

**Karl Aro**  
*Director of Administration*  
*Department of Legislative Services*  
*Maryland*  
*Staff Chair, NCSL*

**William T. Pound**  
*Executive Director*

September 25, 2015

The Honorable James Inhofe  
Chairman  
Environment and Public Works Committee  
United States Senate  
205 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington D.C., 20510

The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
Ranking Member  
Environment and Public Works Committee  
United States Senate  
112 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington D.C., 20510

Dear Chairman Inhofe and Senator Boxer:

On behalf of the National Conference of State Legislatures, the bi-partisan organization that represents all the legislatures of the 50 states and the U.S. territories, we are encouraged by the Senate's passage of H.R. 22, the (DRIVE) Act. As Congress continues toward passage of an overdue long-term surface transportation reauthorization it is important to remember the vital role played by the federal government in developing a long-term vision for supporting a national surface transportation system, which represents a shared commitment between states and the federal government and is vital to enhancing the nation's prosperity and the quality of life of all Americans.

Key to this long-term vision is the certainty provided by sustained and continuing levels of funding from the federal government. By authorizing federal surface transportation programs for six-years, the DRIVE Act seeks to end the numerous short-term extensions that Congress has approved over the past half-decade. However, NCSL remains concerned with the short-term solvency issues that the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) would face with DRIVE Act's approval. NCSL continues to urge Congress to provide the HTF a sustained, user based and reliable long-term source of transportation funding.

NCSL is very appreciative of the Senate's inclusion of Title II Sec. 12004 that would create a new pilot program for states to research transportation system funding alternatives. As revenues for our transportation system continue to decline with vehicles becoming ever more fuel efficient and changing travel patterns nationwide, we must begin to explore transportation funding alternatives to fuel taxes. NCSL has long urged Congress to support the creation of such a program, which would encourage states to explore transportation funding alternatives. We urge the Senate to ensure such language is maintained as the legislation moves forward. Additionally, NCSL supports changes in the legislation that would increase funding to the State and Community Highway Safety Grant Program (Section 402), while also making improvements to distracted driving and drunk driving incentive

**Denver**  
7700 East First Place  
Denver, Colorado 80230-7143  
Phone 303.364.7700 Fax 303.364.7800

**Washington**  
444 North Capitol Street, N.W. Suite 515  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
Phone 202.624.5400 Fax 202.737.1069

Website [www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org)  
Email [info@ncsl.org](mailto:info@ncsl.org)

p. 2

grants that will allow more states to qualify for funds and encourage additional states to enact new highway safety laws.

NCSL remains concerned with the change contained in Section 11004 that would reduce the allocation of funds for the Surface Transportation Program (STP) to states from 50 percent to 45 percent. Such a reduction would negatively impact the ability of states to invest in transformative transportation projects. NCSL supports maintaining the current equitable 50/50 split. Additionally, NCSL urges a reversal of the reduction included in the DRIVE Act for annual TIFIA funding from its current allocation of \$1 billion to \$300 million. Such a reduction would significantly reduce the ability of states to attract private sector partners at a time when overall funding for transportation is significantly constrained. We urge you to instead seek to expand credit-based and loan guarantee programs to incentivize private sector investment in projects sponsored by the public sector.

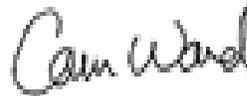
Again, NCSL would like to thank you for ensuring that the issue of federal support for a national surface transportation system is a priority for the U.S. Senate. The benefits to states of a six year, fully funded, surface transportation reauthorization cannot be understated. The real world implications of previous short-term extensions and the uncertainty they cause are cancelled projects and lost jobs. Moving forward, NCSL welcomes the opportunity to continue working with the Senate to ensure a 21<sup>st</sup> century national surface transportation program.

Please contact Ben Husch (202-624-7779 and [ben.husch@ncsl.org](mailto:ben.husch@ncsl.org)) or Melanie Condon (202-624-3597 and [melanie.condon@ncsl.org](mailto:melanie.condon@ncsl.org)) for any additional information.

Sincerely,



Delegate Sally Jameson  
Maryland House of Delegates  
Co-Chair, NCSL Natural Resources and  
Infrastructure Committee



Senator Cam Ward  
Alabama Senate  
Co-Chair, NCSL Natural Resources and  
Infrastructure Committee