

American College of Sports Medicine \* American Council on Exercise  
American Diabetes Association \* American Heart Association  
American Physical Therapy Association \* American Planning Association  
American Public Health Association \* American Society of Landscape Architects  
Association of State Public Health Nutritionists \* Lakeshore Foundation  
League of American Bicyclists \* National Association for Health and Fitness  
National Association of Chronic Disease Directors \* National Association of Counties  
National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity \* National Recreation and Park Association  
Safe Kids Worldwide \* Safe Routes Partnership \* Safe States Alliance  
Sierra Club \* Trust for America's Health \* YMCA of the USA

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October 21, 2019

Chairman Peter DeFazio  
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee  
2134 Rayburn Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Sam Graves  
Transportation & Infrastructure Committee  
1135 Longworth Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,

The undersigned national organizations write to request your leadership in making our transportation system safe and accessible for people bicycling, walking, rolling, and taking transit. Our organizations work with federal, state, and local governments; public and private professionals; and advocates in the transportation, health, environment, and equity sectors to provide safe and accessible transportation options for people, which improves public health and reduces congestion and air pollution in our communities.

We were encouraged by many of the provisions included in S.2302, America's Transportation and Infrastructure Act (ATIA), that will help reach those goals. Those aspects of ATIA will support the building of safer infrastructure that creates new transportation options and extends those options to under-resourced communities. The House transportation bill is an opportunity to build on and strengthen those provisions in ATIA, as specified below.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

The Senate ATIA bill includes critical improvements to the TAP program that we support, including:

- Increasing funding and ensuring that more funding is available for local government priorities;
- Allowing states flexibility to spend a small amount of TAP funding on technical assistance for local governments, as well as flexibility to help under-resourced communities meet the local match; and
- Increasing local control by extending obligation authority to large metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) and giving small MPOs the ability to apply for funding.

We believe these changes will make the TAP program a more efficient and effective tool. We ask you to incorporate these changes into the House bill and to also expand upon them by setting TAP funding at ten percent of the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program and increasing the population share even further.

#### Vulnerable User Safety

Polls show the majority of people would bike and walk more if they felt safer doing so. For some, bicycling and walking are the only choices for transportation regardless of whether it is safe, and those in under-resourced communities suffer disproportionately higher rates of injuries and fatalities. Another poll shows that more than 85 percent of respondents consider it very or somewhat important that their community has sidewalks that can be easily navigated by people with disabilities.

Bicyclist and pedestrian fatalities have continually increased over the last decade, both in actual numbers and as a percentage of overall highway fatalities. ATIA addresses these problems by including new funding for safety and directs that funding to bicycling and walking infrastructure in areas that have high rates of vulnerable user fatalities.

The provisions in ATIA are very welcome and an improvement over current law, and we urge you to make safety for vulnerable users even stronger by including a special rule to the Highway Safety Improvement Program that would require states to address vulnerable user safety in areas with high fatalities. Because vulnerable user fatalities occur along corridors and not in 'hot spots,' many state department of transportation (DOT) formulas do not catch these fatalities. Including a special rule would ensure safety improvements in these corridors for all users, increase rates of biking and walking, and improve connectivity between destinations.

#### Better Planning

ATIA incorporates a pilot project to share access data with several states, MPOs, and rural areas. These data allow communities to model how well potential projects connect people to their destinations. This provision should be included in the House bill as well.

#### Complete Streets

We appreciate the work in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act to include Complete Streets principles in the design of National Highway Systems non-interstate roads, and urge you to build off those efforts by including a policy requiring communities to consider all users of all abilities in the design and reconstruction of roads. In addition, we urge the committee to set aside funding for implementation of these policies to ensure communities have the resources to enhance existing roads to build safe and accessible transportation networks that connect people to important destinations.

In closing, we appreciate the work the committee has been doing leading up to a reauthorization bill, with its particular focus on roadway safety for all users, mobility on demand, and aligning the next bill to meet the needs of the future. As new modes and disruptions come to the transportation system, programs and policies that promote access, safety, and health for all users will help communities respond accordingly. As you move forward on reauthorization, we look forward to working with you to ensure strong policies that make walking, biking, rolling, and transit a priority.

To follow up, please contact any of the following: Caron Whitaker, [caron@bikeleague.org](mailto:caron@bikeleague.org); Margo Pedroso, [margo@saferoutespartnership.org](mailto:margo@saferoutespartnership.org); or Kristy Anderson, [kristy.anderson@heart.org](mailto:kristy.anderson@heart.org).

Sincerely,

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