February 2, 2012

Congressman Dave Camp Chairman Committee on Ways and Means 1102 Longworth House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515 Congressman Sander M. Levin Ranking Member Committee on Ways and Means 1139E Longworth House Office Building Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Surface Transportation Finance and the Highway Trust Fund

Dear Chairman Camp and Ranking Member Levin:

For the past thirty years, Congress has provided dedicated funding for highway and transit programs through an excise tax on gasoline dedicated to the Highway Trust Fund. This funding structure has successfully provided highway and transit programs with secure, dedicated revenues and budgetary firewalls dating back to the Reagan administration. The success of this approach is without question: The Trust Fund has been critical to our nation's ability to build an efficient and multimodal transportation system. With record transit ridership, now is not the time to eliminate guaranteed funding for our nation's public transportation systems, which saved Americans close to \$19 billion in congestion costs in 2009. For the first time in thirty years, the pending legislation H.R. 3864, the American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Financing Act, removes the certainty of a continued revenue source for our transit systems as well as the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program.

Specifically, we are deeply concerned about the provision in H.R. 3864 that would terminate funding from the excise tax on gasoline and replace it with the Alternative Transportation Account. In place of gasoline tax revenues, the legislation would provide a one-time \$40 billion transfer of General Fund revenues to the Alternative Transportation Account. Not only is this level of funding insufficient to fully fund the proposed authorized levels for the Alternative Transportation Account, but it would subject transit and CMAQ funding to the annual appropriations process. This change will make it impossible for public transit systems across the country to plan for the future. It will also make it impossible for the FTA to honor grant agreements.

In addition, this legislation does not make clear how the \$40 billion in General Fund revenues will be offset in the U.S. budget. As a result of this funding gap, we are concerned that the \$40 billion general revenue transfer may not occur leaving transit programs out in the cold.

We strongly encourage the Committee to reject H.R. 3864 and work to continue to fund highway and transit programs through dedicated funding.

Sincerely,

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