

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 13, 2015

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

The Honorable John Thune
Chairman
Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
Chairman
Senate Committee on Banking,
Housing, and Urban Affairs
304 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch
Chairman
Senate Committee on Finance
104 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

The Honorable Bill Nelson
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
716 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Banking,
Housing, and Urban Affairs
713 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Finance
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members,

We are writing to urge you to recede to the Senate position regarding Section 5340 transit apportionments. This formula provides a core investment for some of the most congested and transit dependent Urbanized Areas (UZAs) in the country.

During the House consideration of H.R. 22, the Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy (DRIVE) Act, an amendment was adopted to eliminate the Section 5340 density apportionments and further increase funding for a competitive bus grant program. While many of us support the concept of increasing funding for a discretionary grant program for bus and bus facilities, it makes no sense to slash existing commitments to transit agencies to do so. Elimination of the density formula would be disastrous for our States and the entire Northeast

Corridor. Funding for transit systems that serve Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia would be cut by at least \$1.6 billion over six years. Some transit agencies would see their overall apportionments cut by nearly one-third.

The Northeast Corridor is the most heavily travelled and densely populated corridor in the U.S., and having safe and efficient transportation is critical to not only the region, but also to our nation as a whole. Transit systems in this region account for approximately half of all trips taken nationwide, and the region supports 20 percent of the nation's Gross Domestic Product. The urban areas negatively impacted by the House provision face unparalleled congestion that cannot be addressed by building new highway infrastructure alone. Continued access to high-quality transit alternatives is a necessary priority that requires the funding provided through the Section 5340 program.

For these reasons, we urge Conferees to reject the short-sighted House provision and recede to the Senate position.

Respectfully,

Ben Cardin

Chuck Schumer

Jack Reed

Robert Menendez

Tom Carper

Shirley

Jeanne Shaheen

Elizabeth Warren

Richard Blumenthal

Chris Murphy

Edward J. Markey

Chris Coons

Kirsten Gillibrand

Bob Casey, Jr.

J. A. B.
Frank

Barbara Mikulski
Mark R. Warner

Cc: Sen. Harry Reid and Sen. Mitch McConnell