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National Utility Contractors Association ■
Portland Cement Association ■
Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute ■
The Road Information Program ■
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America

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November 5, 2015

Dear Representatives:

The 31 national association and construction trade union members of the Transportation Construction Coalition (TCC) urge all House members to support H.R. 22, The Drive Act, which contains legislation approved by the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee to reauthorize the federal highway and public transportation programs through FY 2021—"The Surface Transportation Reauthorization & Reform Act (STRRA) of 2015."

The TCC has long advocated changes to the transportation project environmental review and approval process to accelerate the delivery of needed transportation improvements. The STRRA includes a host of new reforms that would help achieve this goal, such as eliminating duplication in the environmental review and project planning stages, strengthening the ability of the U.S. Department of Transportation to manage other federal agencies involved in transportation project reviews and permitting, and clarifying and expanding the use of categorical exclusions.

The TCC appreciates provisions in the STRRA that would enhance the flexibility and transparency of federal highway investments. We also support the measure's increased focus on safety infrastructure and rural road safety. These proposals will help ensure a more efficient, effective and accountable federal-aid highway program.

We fully recognize the challenge of supporting new Highway Trust Fund spending that originates from holding the federal motor fuels tax rate static for more than 20 years. Nonetheless, all House members should be aware that investment levels consistent with the Congressional Budget Office's baseline—as proposed by the STRRA—would fail to keep pace with both the consumer price index and projected increases in construction material costs during the life of the bill. As a result, the legislation would support less highway, bridge, and transit improvements in the future than the current short-term extension is delivering today. It should also be clear the legislation fails to include a long-term Highway Trust Fund revenue solution, despite several amendments that were filed to the bill and not allowed floor consideration.

The TCC has long supported the creation of a dedicated freight program to help ensure federal highway investments are targeted at improving U.S. economic competitiveness. We are concerned the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects Program would allow up to \$500 million to be used for freight rail improvements that have never been eligible to receive Highway Trust Fund resources and that this provision could dilute already limited highway investment under the STRRA. We fully support upgrading all modes of freight infrastructure, but urge members of the Committee to support freight rail projects from the General Fund.

We urge all House members to support H.R. 22 as an important step toward completing a multi-year reauthorization of the highway and public transportation programs in 2015.

Sincerely,

The Transportation Construction Coalition