



Natural building blocks for quality of life

October 26, 2009

Dear Senator:

Congress must act to extend SAFETEA-LU, the nation's surface transportation law, which expired on Sept. 30 and will expire again at the end of the current continuing resolution. We understand that the Senate soon will consider a six-month extension of the law. We support a six-month extension which will allow sufficient time to complete action on a new surface transportation authorization law.

Because rock is the major ingredient in concrete and asphalt, America's quarrying and sand and gravel industries have experienced a 27 percent decrease in production from last year during the first six months of 2009. That is on top of significant production declines in 2007 and 2008 (USGS). The economic stimulus' support for shovel-ready projects is helping prevent additional layoffs in the 40% of our market which is highways however, state and local government budget crises have thwarted to varying degrees the intent of stimulus funds to truly increase net monies available for surface transportation. We support a six-month extension that will allow sufficient time to complete action on a new surface transportation authorization law.

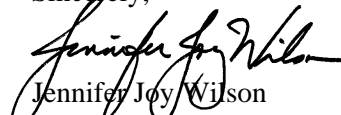
America's infrastructure is crumbling; the design life of post-WWII construction has reached its end. As this country is striving mightily to pull up into recovery, we know we have to have the economic foundations upon which to build our growth. Neither our industry, nor the businesses who must count on dependable freight transportation, nor the drivers, nor the public transport passengers can work with a series of short-term extensions of the highway bill as occurred during the last authorization. Funding certainty is essential to business planning just as the states and localities require funding certainty to advance new transportation projects. Projects are multi-year in nature, from design to permitting to construction. We cannot make basic improvements to 21st century surface transportation system standards until we have sustained investment opportunities through a long-term bill. The current lack of federal commitment already is causing some states to stop highway project contracting.

The surface transportation network is the circulatory system of the nation. It is old and many arteries are congested. Not because of disagreement over the needs and benefits to our nation, but due to reluctance to face the user-pay financing needed, Congress has thus far been unwilling to confront the importance of this issue head-on – seeking delay rather than action.

Already that reluctance to act has cost the maintenance and repair of surface transportation dearly by not repealing the \$8.7 billion rescission contained within SAFETEA-LU. Americans elected their congressional representatives to deal with tough problems. The state of our nation's transportation infrastructure is critical. If Congress fails to address it, economic stability, economic growth and the way of life Americans enjoy are in jeopardy.

We look forward to working with you on reauthorization of the surface transportation law. We agree with business, trucker, and consumer users that increased financing is required for this basic investment in America's future, and we urge you to support a responsible extension that will provide some degree of stability to the states while completing work on the six-year bill.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Joy Wilson
President & CEO