

NATIONAL STONE, SAND & GRAVEL ASSOCIATION



Natural building blocks for quality of life

April 12, 2010

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the members of the National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association, I write to urge you to “Keep the Trust” in the Highway Trust Fund by ensuring all federal user fees collected from the sales of motor vehicle fuels are deposited in the trust fund and invested in transportation infrastructure. These user fees are the vast and primary source of funding our surface transportation infrastructure system and the trust fund’s sanctity is what has historically made our national road and highway network the envy of the world.

Since 1956, federal motor fuel user fees have supported the Highway Trust Fund; added to that mix in 1982 was the Mass Transit Account. Millions of people and tons of cargo depend daily on our nation’s transportation infrastructure system to move people and goods safely and efficiently. The funds collected by these user fees are the lifeblood that finances our nation’s highways, bridges and transit systems.

At a minimum we must protect the transportation infrastructure funding mechanisms currently in place. Multiple reports and studies on our transportation system reveal it stands at a proverbial crossroads. The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that more than \$30 billion per year of new investment is needed just to maintain our highways, bridges and transit systems; \$75 billion is needed in new investment annually to improve conditions and performance. The existing transportation authorization bill, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) expired Sept. 30, 2009. After a series of short extensions, SAFETEA-LU has now been extended through Dec. 31, 2010. While we are very grateful for this extension to calendar year-end and what it means to our membership by providing some short-term certainty, it still does not offer the much needed long-term investment our transportation system desperately requires. Without a multi-year, robustly-funded transportation authorization bill, states and transit agencies will be prevented from advancing much-needed transportation projects that require the predictability and stability offered by a long-term bill.

1605 KING STREET ■ ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314
703 525 8788 ■ 800 342 1415 ■ FAX 703 525 7782
WWW.NSSGA.ORG

Over the past three years, transfers of funds from the General Fund into the Highway Trust Fund have been necessary to maintain its solvency. Any diversion of funds collected in user fees at the fuel pump would be a diversion of funds needed to keep our nation's highways, bridges, roads and transit systems safe and efficient. In short, the significance of this issue cannot be understated – not just relative to the specific issues raised above, but also in broad terms of job sustained, jobs created and indeed the national security interests that were well-recognized at the formation of our national transportation infrastructure system.

We ask that any revenues collected from new fees placed on transportation fuels be dedicated solely to the Highway Trust Fund. An increase in revenues would help address our transportation infrastructure investment needs as we move forward in the 21st Century. Failure to protect our long term infrastructure investment will not only harm our economic growth and competitiveness, lead to more congestion, more pollution, and put the traveling public's safety at risk, it will also lead to greater costs associated with replacing systems not properly maintained.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Joy Wilson
President & CEO