

NATIONAL STONE, SAND & GRAVEL ASSOCIATION



Natural building blocks for quality of life

March 13, 2007

The Honorable John Spratt
Chairman
House Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Ranking Member
House Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Spratt and Ranking Member Ryan:

As the Committee develops the FY '08 budget resolution we want to bring to your attention two important issues: ensuring full funding of highways and transit in accordance with the provisions of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and preservation of the budget firewalls that ensure federal gasoline user fees into the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) are used for transportation infrastructure and not diverted to unrelated activities.

First, we urge that the Committee provide full funding in FY '08 for highways and transit at the level authorized by SAFETEA-LU including restoration of \$631 million in positive revenue aligned budget authority (RABA) called for by SAFETEA-LU. Transportation infrastructure investments create jobs and provide necessary mobility for people and businesses allowing the U.S. to remain competitive with the rest of the world. The needs of the system, however, continue to grow. We ask that Congress adhere to the increased funding levels of SAFETEA-LU and restore the positive RABA which the Administration proposes eliminating.

Federal highway and public transportation investments are financed by user fees collected in the HTF. Congress enacted special budgetary protections for HTF investment in the Transportation Equity Act of the 21st Century (TEA-21) of 1998 in response to years of federal highway and transit investment being held artificially low in the annual appropriations process.

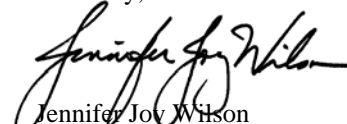
TEA-21 put trust back in the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) by ensuring that federal gasoline tax and other highway user fees were exclusively dedicated to improving the nation's surface transportation infrastructure and invested for that purpose in a timely manner. SAFETEA-LU continued this commitment. During debate of the law, the HTF's budgetary protections were thoroughly discussed and no amendments were raised opposing the highway and public transportation budget protections.

Based near the nation's capital, NSSGA is the world's largest mining association by product volume. Its member companies represent more than 90 percent of the crushed stone and 70 percent of the sand and gravel produced annually in the U.S. and approximately 117,000 working men and women in the aggregates industry. During 2005, a total of about 3.2 billion tons of crushed stone, sand and gravel, valued at \$17.4 billion, were produced and sold in the United States. Without these important commodities, the nation's infrastructure could not be built or maintained and the quality of life enjoyed by American's would be reduced.

NSSGA urges the Committee to include the FY '08 SAFETEA-LU authorized funding level for highways and transit, including \$631 million in positive RABA, in the FY '08 budget resolution. Also, NSSGA requests preservation of the budget firewalls that ensure that fees collected for use of the nation's road and highways go to fund the maintenance and improvement of those roads and highways.

Thank you in advance for consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Joy Wilson
President & CEO