

NATIONAL STONE, SAND & GRAVEL ASSOCIATION



*Natural building blocks for quality of life*

May 2, 2006

The Honorable Dennis Hastert  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
235 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2371 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Hastert and Congressman Pelosi:

On behalf of the National Stone Sand & Gravel Association I write to express our industry's deep concerns over proposals being considered in Congress to suspend the highway user fee even for a brief period of time (two months is commonly mentioned) in an effort to provide a supposed modest measure of relief from gasoline prices. Such an ill-conceived policy would devastate highway and public transit funding and would not provide the relief as advertised to our nation's hard-pressed consumers. It will undermine our nation's infrastructure and cost consumers dearly in lost and compromised services across the board.

At a time when the nation is still struggling with the cleanup from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, unencumbered access to and within our nation's cities and suburbs is critical. Funding for both highway and mass transit systems should be a top priority of our government at all levels and should not be put on the chopping block. Without that commitment, the full range of services provided by government to the people will be undermined – education, commerce, defense, environment, energy, and other services.

Under the current law, the 18.4 cents-per-gallon user fee is divided among the Highway Account, Mass Transit Account, and for the Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund for environmental cleanup. Suspending or eliminating the user fee will have a deleterious effect on all aspects of the nation's transportation system while providing no guarantee, at a time of particularly volatile oil markets, that consumers will pay less at the pump.

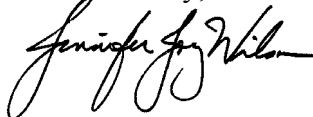
According to the Federal Highway Administration, the average person consumes 708.9 gallons of gasoline per year. If the gasoline user fee were suspended for two months, AND oil prices didn't rise at all, savings to consumers would be little more than \$20 for the average driver. Because the gasoline user fee is a set amount per gallon, not a percentage on the dollar like state and local sales taxes, any reduction would be small and subject to being offset by subsequent price increases. There is no

guarantee that reduction in the gasoline user fee will have any direct impact on the price consumers pay for gasoline. Additionally, the likelihood of the gas user fee being reimposed were it to be suspended is remote.

Rather than suspending the user fee, the nation needs bold, broad solutions to these complex issues involving energy supply and pricing as well as a plan for financing the nation's infrastructure. America needs a rededication of resources and ideas, a new Manhattan Project, a ten-year plan for rebuilding the nation's infrastructure – an aggressive program of research and deployment, of analysis, implementation and action, that will command the attention of the President, the Congress and inspire the people in common purpose with targets and goals that will capture the spirit and vision of President Eisenhower's historic achievement. We need to build upon SAFETEA-LU, the hard fought reauthorization of TEA 21, with the bold strokes that are essential in a post-9/11 world, not undermine its intent with what appear to be short-term political maneuvers.

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 115,000 working men and women in the aggregates industry. We stand ready to support you, to work with you on a long-term vision that will sustain our way of life for generations. This is what NSSGA stands for, and we look forward to standing with you, taking your lead, building the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jennifer Joy Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Jennifer Joy Wilson  
President & CEO

CC: The Honorable Bill Frist  
The Honorable Harry Reid