

June 8, 2021

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio, Chair
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves, Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
United States House of Representatives
2164 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,

On behalf of the members of the California Transit Association, I write to you today to express our support for the “Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation in America Act” (INVEST in America Act).

The INVEST in America Act advances a bold vision for the country’s surface transportation network that is furthered, in part, by an unprecedented level of federal investment in public transportation. The \$204 billion the bill would invest in public transportation and rail systems over the next five years is a welcome supplement to the investments made by the State of California to bring public transportation and rail assets into a state of good repair and to expand access to affordable, frequent and efficient transit service.

We appreciate that the bill proposes a series of programmatic changes to various discretionary grant and financing programs and introduces several new programs, designed to better leverage federal investments and deliver on progressive policy objectives. We continue to review these programmatic changes and new programs with our members and hope to engage with you more fully on them as the bill moves through the legislative process.

With that said, we would like to acknowledge and applaud the following provisions that align with the Association’s policy priorities, as communicated in our May 5 priorities letter:

Core Transit and Rail Programs: Consistent with our letter, the INVEST in America Act increases funding for core transit and rail programs. These programs are the lifeblood of public transit and rail agencies across the country and are vital to replacing aging fleets, modernizing our transit and rail assets, and delivering jobs benefits to workers in construction, manufacturing, operations, and maintenance.

Capital Investment Grant Program: Consistent with our letter, the INVEST in America Act increases the federal cost share to 80 percent and raises the caps for small starts projects to \$320 million for federal cost and \$400 million for total cost.

Zero-Emission Bus Grant Program: Consistent with our letter, the INVEST in America Act rewards states and transit agencies that have made a commitment to transition to fully zero-emission fleets by granting them access to a funding set-aside for zero-emission bus grants. This policy would support California's transit agencies in expeditiously transitioning our entire 12,000 bus fleet to zero-emission technologies while also incentivizing transit agencies across the country to take aggressive steps to accelerate zero-emission bus deployment.

Grade Crossings and Separations: Consistent with our letter, the INVEST in America Act provides new funding to support the design and delivery of grade crossing improvements and grade separations to improve the safety of surrounding areas and overall service.

Transit-Oriented Development: Consistent with our letter, the INVEST in America Act expands federal funding and financial tools to encourage transit-oriented development projects and housing near public transit, including for affordable housing projects.

Financing: Consistent with our letter, the INVEST in America Act expands and streamlines the financing tools available to transit and rail agencies to augment direct investment in the nation's transportation infrastructure.

Additional Considerations: Consistent with our letter, the INVEST in America Act provides new funding to pilot and study reduced and fare free transit. The bill also advances zero-emission transportation technologies by providing funding to support the deployment of zero-emission locomotive and ferry technologies.

Again, we thank you for your leadership in proposing the INVEST in America Act. We look forward to continuing to engage with you on this bill as it moves through the legislative process. If you have any questions regarding the amendments we are proposing, please contact me at 916-446-4656 x1034 or via email at michael@caltransit.org.

Sincerely,



Michael Pimentel
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker, United States House of Representatives
California's Congressional Delegation
The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor, State of California
Nuria I. Fernandez, Deputy Administrator, Federal Transit Administration
Amit Bose, Deputy Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration
David Kim, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency
Mitch Weiss, Executive Director, California Transportation Commission
Toks Omishakin, Director, California Department of Transportation
Members, Executive Committee, California Transit Association
Members, Federal Legislative Committee, California Transit Association