



June 16, 2020

US House of Representatives, Transportation & Infrastructure Committee

ATTN: Hon. Peter DeFazio, Chair;

Hon. Sam Graves, Ranking Member;

Hon. Eleanor Holmes Norton, Highways & Transit Subcommittee Chair

Hon. Rodney Davis, Ranking Member, Highways & Transit
Subcommittee

Ref: INVEST in America Act

House T&I Committee,

The Pittsburgh Community Reinvestment Group, a consortium of community leaders working for economic justice, equitable investment practices, and sufficient financial resources to revitalize communities throughout Allegheny County. Is writing in support of House T&I Chairman DeFazio's INVEST in America Act, and strengthening of transit and fix-it-first policy (please read on).

The INVEST in America Act takes a markedly different approach to transportation policy that would begin to put outcomes—instead of price tags—at the center of our decision making. Among other things, INVEST proposes significant changes to the core highway program by requiring states to prioritize road and bridge repair, measure and reduce greenhouse gases, improve access to jobs and opportunity with every dollar spent, and make safety and access—for everyone—paramount. We strongly support the big step forward this bill takes, but we also urge you to tighten the language to ensure that funds cannot be spent on new construction before maintenance needs are met. We must prioritize taking care of our existing system before expanding it.

Many changes in transit policy are also oriented around improving access, like incentivizing agencies to increase frequency rather than merely reducing operating costs, which can help provide better service where it's most needed. This is particularly important if we are serious about GHG emissions or unburdening low- and moderate-income households from the crippling cost of a private vehicle. Transit agencies need to be incented to expand service where it's needed, not just where it's "cost-effective." Hence, we also urge you to increase funding for transit to create more balance in the federal transportation program, support efforts to improve maintenance, and provide more reliable service.

We commend the Committee for recognizing the inextricable connections between land use, transportation, and economics, specifically affordable housing. We'll never be able to realize our climate goals or an equitable economic

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Brookline Area Community Council
Design Center Pittsburgh
East Allegheny Community Council
East Hills Consensus Group
East Liberty Development, Inc.
Economic Development South
Etna Economic Development Corp
Fineview Citizens Council
Friendship Community Group
Garfield Jubilee Association
Grounded Pittsburgh
Habitat for Humanity of
Greater Pittsburgh
Hazelwood Initiative, Inc.
Highland Park CDC
Hill District CDC
Hill District Consensus Group
Hill House EDC
Hilltop Alliance
Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
Larimer Consensus Group
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Development Corporation
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Penn Hills CDC
Perry Hilltop Citizens Council
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recovery without also providing more, and more attainable, housing in places where people can drive less and walk or take transit more. This bill takes some important steps forward by moving to integrate housing and land use into existing transportation planning and creating a new federal office to coordinate these plans equitably. Much more is needed, including new standards to reduce overall housing plus transportation (H+T) costs, which are far too high for many Americans, but this is an important first step.

Finally, we applaud the long-overdue rethinking of what being safety means in transportation. INVEST takes away state DOTs' ability to set *negative* annual safety targets. Today, not only are drivers striking and killing more people walking and biking— and people of color 7 times more often than whites in many states - than in decades, but many of those states currently assume *more* people will die and that they cannot or will not stem the tide. INVEST pushes states to realize that there are things they can and must do in the design of their roadways to improve safety, such as requiring speed limits be set with a consideration of the community surrounding and using a corridor rather than how drivers people behave - currently, if people drive too fast, the speed limit is often *raised* to accommodate the rule breakers.

Past reauthorizations have been an exercise in spending more money and magically wishing for better outcomes with outdated policy. With Chairman DeFazio's proposal, the INVEST in America Act, the House is charting a welcome course toward updating our country's 1950's approach to transportation. We support this proposal and hope that Senate leaders transfer their enthusiasm to the Chairman's more ambitious approach.

Sincerely,

Ernie Hogan
Executive Director

CC: Hon. Mike Doyle, US Representative, PA-18
Hon. Connor Lamb, US Representative, PA-17