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June 8, 2021

Representative Peter DeFazio
2134 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Sam Graves
1135 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives DeFazio and Graves,

On behalf of Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC), the nation's leading advocate for connected trail and active transportation networks, we write to express our enthusiastic support for the INVEST in America Act, introduced in the House of Representatives on Friday, June 4. This is a transformative bill the likes of which we have not seen in a generation, which purposefully addresses key societal goals, such as safety and climate emissions, and will go far to begin to address skyrocketing demand for trails and safe routes to walk, bike or roll to routine destinations.

The INVEST in America Act effectively recognizes, for the first time, trails, walking and biking as essential to the nation's transportation system. It provides a comprehensive approach to planning and constructing critical infrastructure to ensure that all Americans can safely and conveniently access jobs, transit and essential services regardless of whether they drive. It also creates accountability for reversing unacceptable legacies of current transportation priorities, including relentlessly rising pedestrian and bicycle fatalities and serious injuries and vehicles topping the nation's sources of carbon emissions.

The bill recognizes that burgeoning demand for safe places to walk and bike requires restoring and increasing the buying power of existing dedicated programs, Transportation Alternatives and the Recreational Trails Program. It also responds to the rise of transformational plans to leverage active transportation projects into highly functional systems connecting within and between communities by establishing the Active Transportation Connectivity Grant program. This innovation to strategically invest in connectivity with focused grants beyond the scope of what current programs can deliver is central to the bill's success.

Demand for connectivity investment exceeds the proposed \$250 million per year, but we are grateful for the opportunity to begin to address this critical need and hopeful that investment in this program will grow as it proves instrumental to achieve the nation's transportation goals. The significant share of member-designated projects in the bill that are focused on active transportation connections further demonstrates compelling demand for this new approach.

We strongly support the INVEST in America Act, and look forward to working with you to ensure that this bill retains its integrity throughout the transportation reauthorization process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Mills".

Kevin Mills
Vice President of Policy