May 19, 2015

Dear Congressman:

As the House of Representatives/Senate pave the way for a two-month extension of the Highway Trust Fund contract authority and expenditure authority, we urge Congress to use this time to solve the Highway Trust Fund crisis and enact a six-year surface transportation authorization bill to stabilize and increase HTF funding to levels more in line with the country’s infrastructure needs. There is no magic answer and time is running out for Congress to act.

We represent the collective voice of the Highways Material Group, which is comprised of organizations that provide the construction materials and equipment essential to building America’s roads, highways, and bridges. Our member companies will employ tens of thousands of men and women in well-paying American jobs that can strengthen our country with a new surface transportation initiative, not only because of their work, but also because of the taxes they will pay and the goods and services they will purchase. We are sensitive to the challenges of reconciling the differences regarding the federal funding of our nation’s infrastructure, but investing is an imperative for economic growth and job creation; national security; improved safety for our citizens; cleaner air from reduced congestion; and freedom of mobility that is an essential American value.

However, yet another temporary fix beyond July 31 instead of producing a multiyear bill will not make any of the above possible. Major infrastructure cannot be funded on a month to month basis. With already $50 billion in deficit spending resulting from short-term policy extensions and funding patches from the general fund, all Congress is doing is shifting the burden to our children and grandchildren. The longer Congress delays in making the investments necessary to our highways, roads, and bridges, the more difficult and expensive it will be for our nation to deliver this critical national priority. This short term extension is a necessary step, but until states and localities can move forward without the fear of the federal government failing to meet its funding obligations our roads, highways and bridges will continue to deteriorate.

The latest estimates from the Department of Transportation project that the Highway Account of the Highway Trust Fund will still have about $3.6 billion in cash on hand as of July 31 and the Mass Transit Account will still have $1.6 billion. Those same estimates show the Highway Account hitting a zero balance sometime in late August and the Mass Transit Account hitting zero at around the last week of September or the first week of October.
In order to overcome the Highway Trust Fund crisis and set America on the path back to being global infrastructure leaders, we support the adoption of any user-fee based funding options and innovative finance tools to provide federal and state transportation departments with the resources they need to make critical investments in our transportation infrastructure.

We urge you to lead your colleagues in Congress to act now to fund America’s surface transportation infrastructure. Attached are our principles for reauthorization. We hope you agree with these principles and will engage us in further discussion on our views. Please call on any of us if we can be of assistance as Congress deals with this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Jerry Voigt  
President & CEO  
American Concrete Pavement Association

Dennis J. Slater  
President  
Association of Equipment Manufacturers

Brian P. McGuire  
President & CEO  
Associated Equipment Distributors

Bob Risser  
President & CEO  
Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute

Mike Acott  
President & CEO  
National Asphalt Pavement Association

Robert Garbini  
President  
National Ready Mixed Concrete Association

Michael W. Johnson  
President & CEO  
National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association

Jim Toscas  
President & CEO  
Portland Cement Association

Enclosure
Funding Principles for the Next Surface Transportation Authorization

According to the U. S. Department of Transportation, it will be unable to undertake any new federal highway obligations to the states after May 2015. Our eight national associations, comprising the HIGHWAY MATERIALS GROUP, strongly urge Congress to act now to solve the Highway Trust Fund challenge by enacting a six year Surface Transportation Authorization bill and the funding necessary to stabilize and grow the HTF before May 31, 2015.

The HIGHWAY MATERIALS GROUP, representing nearly one million direct jobs in the highway materials industry, is committed to an authorization bill that has a bold vision to increase Federal-aid highway investments.

- America’s Economic Prosperity/Global Competitiveness
America’s economic vitality depends on an integrated national, intermodal surface transportation network that moves goods and people to maximize global competitiveness, quality of life, and economic prosperity for all citizens. Unfortunately, the investments needed to maintain and expand the highway system have been inadequate. As a result, America is ill-prepared to meet the competitive demands of the global economy.

- Constitutional Responsibility
Maintaining a vital, national infrastructure has been a federal responsibility since the founding of the Republic. Congress is tasked with establishing “post roads”, pre-cursors of today’s national highway system, and regulating commerce among the states and with other nations. Commerce is the lifeblood of our nation’s economy, and America’s transportation infrastructure is its circulatory system. This network of roads and transportation structures – built by Americans employed in well-paying jobs that cannot be exported – is essential for the economic growth, safety, security, freedom of mobility, and quality of life benefiting every American. We oppose efforts to transfer this responsibility to the states as an unfunded federal mandate.

- User-fee based
In order to overcome the highway funding gap, we support the adoption of any user-fee based funding options and innovative finance tools to provide federal and state transportation departments with the funding they need to make critical investments in our transportation infrastructure.

- Timeliness/Long-term authorization
The longer Congress delays in making the investments necessary to our highways, roads and bridges, the more difficult and expensive it will be for our nation to finance this critical and necessary endeavor. At a time when cost is paramount, Congress must act now. Timely enactment of a six year authorization bill is critical for state transportation departments to plan and budget for projects and for our industry to make critical business decisions.

We urge Congress to enact a six year, user-fee funded surface transportation authorization NOW!