



May 25, 2017

The Honorable Diane Black
Chair, House Budget Committee

The Honorable Michael Enzi
Chair, Senate Budget Committee

The Honorable John Yarmuth
Ranking Member, House Budget Committee

The Honorable Bernard Sanders
Ranking Member, Senate Budget Committee

Dear Chairwoman Black, Chairman Enzi, Ranking Member Yarmuth, and Ranking Member Sanders,

As you prepare your FY 2018 budget resolutions and set priorities for our nation, we are writing to urge you to invest as robustly as possible in the domestic discretionary side of the budget, which includes support for transportation and infrastructure investments.

While we recognize that there are no easy choices to be made in the budget process, we respectfully submit that the growth of the domestic economy and the creation and support of high-quality, well-paying jobs must be our top priority, and that an extensive and well-functioning domestic transportation infrastructure system is an essential prerequisite to a healthy economy.

As a coalition of 42 different State Chambers of Commerce recently [noted](#): *“One of America’s greatest strengths is our ability to create diverse networks of transportation infrastructure to cheaply and efficiently move goods and services around the nation. In order to compete with our economic advantage, other nations are making historic investments in their own transportation infrastructure. China, India, and Europe spend about 9%, 8%, and 5% of their gross domestic product, respectively, on infrastructure investment. Meanwhile, infrastructure investments in the United States have declined to a mere 2.4% of GDP.”* And the federal investment in infrastructure has been shrinking over time. As a % of GDP, federal grants to state and local governments for transportation and water infrastructure has [shrunk](#) from a high of .60% in 1980 to about .35% in 2016.

In 2017, the American Society of Civil Engineers [gave](#) the United States a D+ grade on its infrastructure report card. The World Economic Forum’s Global Competitiveness 2016/2017 Report [ranks](#) our infrastructure just 11th in the world, a major hindrance for the world’s largest economy.

The most recent Urban Mobility Scorecard from the Texas A&M Transportation Institute (TTI) [shows](#) that travel delays due to traffic congestion cause drivers to waste more than 3 billion gallons of fuel and kept travelers stuck in their cars for nearly 7 billion extra hours every year – 42 hours per rush-hour commuter. The average travel delay per commuter is more than twice what it was in 1982. For cities of less than 500,000 people, the problem is four times worse than in 1982. The total nationwide price tag: \$160 billion, or \$960 per commuter.

The good news is that fixing this problem is broadly supported by the public. A May 2017 [poll](#) of more than 1,000 Americans showed that “Rebuilding America’s Infrastructure” was viewed as “Extremely

Important” or “Very Important” by 67% of citizens, and support is consistent across a broad swath of regions, age groups, and even political parties – it’s one of the few things left that we all agree on!

The OneRail Coalition looks forward to working with the bipartisan leadership of the House and Senate to invest effectively in domestic transportation infrastructure to support a growing economy, and urges the Budget Committees to take a leadership role on this national priority.

Sincerely,

Anne Canby
Director, OneRail Coalition

CC: Members, U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on the Budget
CC: Members, United States Senate, Committee on the Budget

For further information, contact:

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About the OneRail Coalition:

OneRail is a diverse group of rail stakeholders who have come together to educate America about the benefits of a strong freight and passenger rail system. Our members include the American Association of Private Railroad Car Owners (AAPRCO), American Public Transportation Association (APTA), American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association (ASLRRA), Amtrak, Association of American Railroads (AAR), Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET), Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE), Brotherhood of Railroad Signalmen (BRS), National Association of Railroad Passengers (NARP), National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association (NRC), Railway Supply Institute (RSI), SMART Transportation Division, States for Passenger Rail Coalition (S4PRC), Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP), and the Transportation Communications International Union/International Association of Machinists (TCU/IAM).

Our corporate supporters include AECOM, Alstom, Caterpillar, General Electric, HNTB, WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff, and Siemens. These global companies represent the engineering and manufacturing sectors that are an essential component of private sector job creation in the transportation industry in the United States.