

To: Brewer City Council; Brewer City Manager; Councilor Beverly Uhlenhake; Councilor Joseph Ferris; Councilor Kevin O'Connell; Deputy Mayor Matthew Vachon; Mayor Jerry W. Goss; Eddington Board of Selectman and Town Manager; Carol Woodcock / U.S. Senator Susan Collins; Elizabeth Montgomery Schneider MacTaggart / U.S. Senator Angus King; Representative Arthur Verow - District #21; Representative David Johnson - District#20; Rosemary Winslow / U.S. Congressman Mike Michaud; Senator Edward Youngblood - District#31;

## T4America statement in response to Senate adoption of stopgap to avoid Highway Trust Fund insolvency

31 Jul 2014 | Posted by Transportation for America | 0 Comments

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Senate today approved a House-passed measure to transfer \$10.8 billion from the general fund to cover the looming shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund until next spring. The stopgap bill, which now heads to President Obama's desk, comes one day before a deadline to avoid significant funding cuts during the height of construction season.

James Corless, director of Transportation for America, issued this statement in response:

"We are relieved that thousands of communities, more than a half-million workers and their families, and millions of commuters will be spared the pain of drastic cuts in promised federal funding to build and repair our bridges, roads and transit systems.

*That said, Congress is rapidly running out of last-minute budget gimmicks to patch holes in America's key infrastructure fund, and must immediately begin the task of replacing pretend dollars with the real money necessary to continue to call ourselves a first-world nation. Perhaps the most important outcome of this go-round is that members of both parties, in both chambers, have voiced a growing discomfort with hastily crafted, short-term fixes along with a desire to find a long-term funding solution.*

*In truth, they have bought themselves only a few short months to grapple with an issue they have delayed for years. We look forward to working with leaders in both houses as they make good on their promise to work in earnest on a long-term solution to fund the infrastructure our economy and daily lives depend on."* •

<http://t4america.org/2014/07/31/t4america-statement-in-response-to-senate-adoption-of-stopgap-to-avoid-highway-trust-fund-insolvency/>

## Congress passes bill to keep Highway Trust Fund afloat

August 1, 2014 (excerpt of original article)

*"At a time when America's crumbling roads and bridges are causing constant travel delays and headaches, these short-term fixes are just plain short-sighted," said former U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, who co-chairs Building America's Future. "The strength of our nation's economy rests on Congress finding a long-term solution so we can repair and modernize our roads, rails and bridges for the long haul."*

*"State department of transportation officials across the country are today relieved that the Highway Trust Fund will continue to support critically needed highway and transit projects through May, 2015," he said. "But while this short-term patch is an important step, Congress must keep America working and the economy moving forward by passing a long-term surface transportation reauthorization bill that is supported by a sustainable source of funding as soon as possible."*

The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) also called on Congress to develop a long-term solution to surface transportation funding.

"Infrastructure is essential to a strong manufacturing sector, and the NAM will continue to work with Congress and the Obama administration to ensure that it is a national priority," said NAM Senior Vice President of Policy and Government Relations Aric Newhouse.

[http://www.progressiverailroading.com/federal\\_legislation\\_regulation/news/Congress-passes-bill-to-keep-Highway-Trust-Fund-afloat](http://www.progressiverailroading.com/federal_legislation_regulation/news/Congress-passes-bill-to-keep-Highway-Trust-Fund-afloat)41242

## **Senator Collins' Statement on Senate Passage of Highway Trust Fund Legislation**

WASHINGTON, D.C.-- U.S. Senator Susan Collins, Ranking Member of the Senate Transportation Appropriations Committee, tonight released this statement following Senate passage of the Highway and Transportation Funding Act to extend the Highway Trust Fund.

**Jul 29 2014**

*"While I would prefer a more permanent fix for the highway trust fund, tonight's Senate vote is an essential step to ensure that states continue to have the critical resources they need to build and repair our nation's highways, roads, and bridges. With more than 700,000 jobs depending upon Congress coming up with at least a short-term solution, time is running out. It is important for the House and Senate to agree on a bill before the August recess and get it to the President quickly." •*

*"I remain committed to working with my colleagues in the months ahead on a fiscally-responsible long-term solution to funding our highways, roads, and bridges."*

<http://www.collins.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2014/7/senator-collins-statement-on-senate-passage-of-highway-trust-fund-legislation>

## **We can't keep hitting the "Snooze" button on transportation**

July 22 | Posted by Anthony Foxx |(excerpt)

Almost since my first day as Secretary of Transportation, I have been ringing the alarm bell about the looming insolvency of the highway trust fund --the federal source that helps pay for our nation's highways and transit.

Last week--after weeks and weeks of alarm, an online Highway Trust Fund ticker we've updated every month, an April bus tour, meetings with dozens of governors and mayors and stakeholders, and a lot of my own shoe leather on Capitol Hill-- the U.S. House passed a measure to avert the crisis with a ten-month patch. Later this week, the Senate is expected to take up a similar measure.

*But let's not kid ourselves: this is a short-term patch, and if it passes, it's hard not to imagine that Congress will simply hit the snooze button on this issue the next time it rolls around.*

*Unless something changes, come May 2015, we are likely to be right back here again with the shot clock set to expire, looking for an easy solution to patch us for a few more months, and leaving the real conversation for another time.*

*Because if we are only building for the present, we're building for the past. We are, in effect, managing a declining system, a system that is crumbling, a system of growing potholes, a system that is creating longer and longer commute times, and a system that will cost us jobs we have no business losing.*

*The real danger is that our chronic underinvestment in transportation is starting to feel normal because we've been doing it so long. But every year, the cost of catching up grows more and more out of reach. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates that, at current spending levels, we will fall \$850 billion short of transportation needs nationally by just 2020. And every year, we're pushing the cost of that deficit forward onto our children and their children.*

The idea that Congress cannot make a multiyear future-oriented transportation bill happen is one of the biggest self-fulfilling prophecies in American politics today, and it is killing transportation, one of the key building blocks of our economy.

So, here we are, on the eve of *another patch, another short term measure, another cloud of uncertainty that will grow our infrastructure deficit* and roll the drawbridge up a little more on future generations. Meanwhile, Congress is running out of mattresses, child seats, and rocks to look under to pay for transportation.

And today, 11 of my predecessors and I have signed an open letter to Congress calling on them to pass a long-term solution. Together, I and former Secretaries LaHood, Peters, Mineta, Slater, Pena, Skinner, Card, Burnley, Dole, Coleman, and Boyd have served 35 years standing watch over our nation's roads, rails, and subways. Five of us serving under Democratic presidents, seven under Republicans.

Right now, Washington is dictating outcomes to the American people. But in our democracy, it should work the other way. So we'll take this case to the American people and let them decide if the future is worth fighting for.

I think they'll say "yes" to a real transportation solution. Because from Lincoln's transcontinental railroad to Eisenhower's interstate highway system, we have always been a "yes" • country, not a "no" • country.

<http://www.transportation.gov/fastlane/we-cant-keep-hitting-snooze-button-transportation>

## **King Supports Highway Trust Fund Legislation**

### **Criticizes House for Altering Senate's Bill**

Thursday, July 31, 2014 (excerpt)

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senator Angus King (I-Maine) released the following statement this evening after the *Senate passed legislation*, advanced by the House of Representatives, *that will fund the Highway Trust Fund through next May, undermining the effort to pass a comprehensive transportation appropriations bill this year that will solve the problem in the long-term:*

*“I had hoped for a shorter extension which would have kept the pressure on Congress to deal with this issue in a comprehensive way before the end of the year,” • Senator King said. “But when the choice is between something or nothing, I’m certainly not going to stick the American people with nothing and make them pay the price for the House’s bad decision. This bill will replenish the fund and ensure that vital construction projects will continue and the resulting jobs will be preserved, but I would have much preferred our Senate bill, which does the same thing but in a fiscally responsible way that would have also forced Congress to find a much-needed long-term solution.” •*

<http://www.king.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/king-supports-highway-trust-fund-legislation>

## **Statement on passage of the Highway Trust Fund patch**

Posted by Anthony Foxx | August 1, 2014

*The good news is that Congress has avoided bankrupting the Highway Trust Fund. The bad news is that there is still no long-term certainty, and this latest band-aid expires right as the next construction season begins.*

It is encouraging that the Senate voted earlier this week to act on a long-term transportation bill this year, and I hope that they will continue working toward that goal. *While Congress may be able to wait until May, the country cannot.* Americans deserve a multi-year transportation bill that provides the certainty that businesses and communities deserve, creates jobs, and makes necessary policy updates to lay the foundation for lasting economic growth.

To that end, I will be convening a nationwide virtual town hall on transportation in August to bring together business leaders, transportation advocates, state and local government officials, and everyday Americans who are concerned with the future of America’s transportation infrastructure. Together, we will keep working for a long-term solution by engaging people throughout America to prompt Congress to act.

<http://www.transportation.gov/fastlane/passage-highway-trust-fund-patch>

## **Congress should raise the gas tax to replenish the Highway Trust Fund**

By Editorial Board

on August 03, 2014 at 6:15 AM, updated August 03, 2014 at 6:16 AM

*The good news is that Congress got its act together long enough to pass legislation replenishing the Highway Trust Fund hours before the fund was due to go broke.*

*The bad news is that Congress used an accounting gimmick to do so and ducked its obligation to fix the reason the trust fund is running dry in the first place. The gas tax is too low. It needs to be raised.*

Yes, you read that right. Here's why.

*The Highway Trust Fund is a critical source of money for building and repairing the nation's roads and bridges. Its main source of revenue is the federal gas tax of 18.4 cents per gallon. While it's not a perfect mechanism, the tax rightly falls heaviest on the heaviest users of the roads. The last time it was raised was 1993. A lot has changed since then.*

- *Inflation has eaten away at that 18 cents; its value is more like 12 cents now.*
- *Cars have gotten more fuel efficient, so we're using less gas.*
- *We're driving fewer miles, so we're using even less gas.*

- *The nation's infrastructure is 21 years older and we're not keeping up with the maintenance. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates the nation's surface transportation system needs \$1.7 trillion in repairs by 2020 -- almost double what we're spending now.*

Congress won't raise taxes. It can't agree on an alternate method to fund highways and public transportation. So it passes another temporary patch paid for with a pension gimmick. Even when Congress does something, it does nothing. It's beyond shameful.

[http://www.syracuse.com/opinion/index.ssf/2014/08/congress\\_should\\_raise\\_the\\_gas\\_tax\\_to\\_replenish\\_the\\_highway\\_trust\\_fund\\_editorial.html](http://www.syracuse.com/opinion/index.ssf/2014/08/congress_should_raise_the_gas_tax_to_replenish_the_highway_trust_fund_editorial.html)

## **Incompetence and cowardice result in poor roads and bridges**

### **Morass of folly**

Published: Sunday, August 3, 2014 at 3:15 a.m.

Last Modified: Friday, August 1, 2014 at 5:42 p.m.

AAA of the Carolinas recently released its latest report on the state of bridges in South Carolina. Twenty-one percent of the state's 9,200 bridges are not structurally fit to handle the amount of traffic they are currently bearing.

Some of those bridges are in Spartanburg County. Six of the worst are on I-26.

And bridges are only part of the problem. The Palmetto State's roads and highways are in need of \$30 billion of work over the next 20 years to restore them to good condition, according to the state Department of Transportation.

There seems to be little hope the work will be done.

*On the federal level, Congress does not have the intestinal fortitude to finance the Federal Highway Trust Fund. The fund is fueled by federal gasoline taxes and parceled out to states for major transportation projects and maintenance.*

*The fund would have started operating at a deficit this past Friday, but Congress passed a stopgap measure that will keep it going for a few more months, using accounting tricks to put another \$11 billion into the fund. So far, Congress has refused to come up with a long-term plan to finance the fund.*

*The obvious answer is to increase the federal gasoline tax, which hasn't been raised in 20 years, failing to keep up with inflation. Congress is unwilling to do so in an election year.*

That same unwillingness to face facts can be seen in Columbia.

Instead, one candidate for governor has introduced a plan that would take money from the state's general budget, and the governor insists she will reveal a road plan next year.

*And, even if the money were raised for transportation projects in the state, we don't have any assurance the money would be spent wisely.*

*It would still be handled by a state Transportation Commission that has wasted millions of taxpayer's dollars in the past, a commission that has ignored state needs and priorities to fund a collection of pet projects.*

This is because, despite the waste and the bad judgment, the General Assembly has refused to reform the Department of Transportation. It hasn't put the department under the governor, who could be held accountable for its performance. It insists on maintaining a transportation commission that has repeatedly failed the public's trust.

*These factors combine to make it highly unlikely that our roads and bridges will see the improvement needed, at least not until people who want safe roads and bridges demand change in Columbia and Washington.*

South Carolina's gasoline tax is one of the lowest in the nation. By raising it, South Carolina could get much of the money from out-of-state travelers who use our interstate highways. But no one in Columbia seems ready to take that obvious step.

<http://www.goupstate.com/article/20140803/OPINION/408031007?p=1&t>

- **Yes—this article is not about Maine—however it does point out what I've been saying all along. Why is the MaineDOT and the FHWA so seemingly ready to squander \$61 million on a project that not only does not meet the original Purpose and Needs, it punts the system linkage need and the need for a limited-access facility to an unknown future time with an unknown cost. So like this editorial, we have no assurance from our state or the feds that our critical transportation dollars will be expended on our failing roads and bridges and not on an engineer's favorite new pet project. Repair and replacement of our failed and failing roads and bridges may go unnoticed for political gains and fanfare that are the upside of those new shiny projects. That is not what our residents deserve and not what the tourists that spend their vacation dollars in our state deserve.**

## **AAA Disappointed with Congressional Vote on Transportation Bill**

August 1st, 2014 by admin

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



**Michael Green**  
Manager,  
AAA Public Relations  
(202) 942-2082

[mgreen@national.aaa.com](mailto:mgreen@national.aaa.com)

*Statement by Bob Darbelnet, President and CEO of AAA*

(WASHINGTON, July 31, 2014) *“AAA is disappointed that the House has allowed politics and an easily fixable drafting error to interfere with a bipartisan proposal that would set the stage for a long-term transportation bill. It is imperative that the Highway Trust Fund remain solvent, but Congress ultimately must work to secure the multi-year funding for transportation that American motorists expect and deserve.”*

*“The Senate bill would have positioned Congress to work toward passage of multi-year, fully funded transportation legislation following the elections in November. The House extension delays the tough decisions until 2015, which puts jobs, the economy and American mobility at risk. AAA looks forward to working with those leaders in Congress who seek to secure a multi-year transportation bill that focuses on results, ensures adequate funding and keeps the safety of our roads and bridges a national priority.” •*

<http://newsroom.aaa.com/tag/highway-trust-fund/>