

BETTY McCOLLUM
4TH DISTRICT, MINNESOTA

2256 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-6631
FAX: (202) 225-1968

661 LASALLE STREET
SUITE 110
SAINT PAUL, MN 55114
(651) 224-9191
FAX: (651) 224-3056

mccollum.house.gov



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April 29, 2019

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio
Chairman
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2164 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves:

As the Committee begins to work on important legislation such as the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and the Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) Reauthorization, I would like to submit some of the transportation and infrastructure priorities for the Fourth District of Minnesota. Whether the Committee decides to move forward with individual reauthorizations, or an overarching infrastructure overhaul as mentioned by Chairman DeFazio and President Trump, the following priorities should be given special attention:

Surface Transportation Priorities

- While the Committee develops highway and transit reauthorizations, the following projects in the Fourth District are particularly important to my constituents and the greater Minnesotan economy:
 1. METRO Gold Line Corridor (Gateway): Between Union Depot and Woodbury
 2. Third Street/Kellogg Boulevard Bridge: linking downtown St. Paul to the City's East Side
 3. Riverview Corridor: Between Union Depot and the Mall of America
 4. Rush Line Corridor: Between Union Depot and White Bear Lake
 5. Red Rock Corridor: Between Union Depot and Hastings

Passenger Rail

- Increase support for passenger rail through the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements grant program and authorize a State of Good Repair grant program.
- Provide funding for rail improvements from Union Depot in St. Paul, MN to Chicago, IL which will enable a second daily passenger train for this corridor and for the completion of an environmental assessment of existing rails.

- Provide funding for the East Metro Rail Yards Improvement Project, an initiative that Ramsey County has been developing with project partners to identify improvements that seek to reduce train delay, supply efficient routing, provide flexibility in the handling of existing freight and passenger trains, and maintain capacity for freight and passenger rail growth.

Provisions from the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act

- Many of the provisions in the FAST Act that address highway and transit programs as well as Amtrak should be reauthorized through 2020 including, but not limited to:
 1. Expanded funding options for programs under the Capital Investment Grant program (Core Capacity/Small Starts/Fixed Guideway Capital Projects).
 2. Conversion of the Surface Transportation block grant program.
 3. Modification to the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program, making transit-oriented projects eligible to apply for TIFIA loans.
 4. Fully fund Capital Improvement Grants.

Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA) Reauthorization

- The Army Corps of Engineers Navigations and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) on the Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway (UMR-IWW) was authorized in Title VIII of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-114). NESP is critical to the long-term sustainability of the UMR-IWW and will improve efficiency and capacity of the navigation system while protecting, preserving, and enhancing the ecosystem on this national significant waterway.

I appreciate your consideration of my requests and look forward to working with you as the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee continues its work in the 116th Congress. If you have questions or require additional information, please contact me or Patrick Maillet on my staff (patrick.maillet@mail.house.gov; 202-225-6631).

Sincerely,



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress