



The Honorable James Inhofe
Chair, Committee on Environment
and Public Works
United States Senate
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Boxer,
Ranking Member, Committee on Environment
and Public Works
United States Senate
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chair, Committee on Finance
United States Senate
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member, Committee on Finance
United States Senate
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chair, Committee on Banking, Housing
and Urban Affairs
United States Senate
534 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
Ranking Member, Committee on Banking, Housing
and Urban Affairs
United States Senate
534 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

March 19, 2015

Dear Senators:

We strongly urge you to include robust funding for the Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) and the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) in the Highway Trust Fund reauthorization. Maintaining our transportation systems on federal lands is of vital importance to the future public use and enjoyment of our federal lands, including national parks, forests and wildlife refuges.

Roads, bridges and transit systems on our federal lands serve as main arteries to major cities as well as nearly one billion recreation and tourism visits annually, yet funding levels for federal lands transportation programs have been largely unchanged for twenty years. As a result of chronic underfunding, an increasingly costly \$12 billion backlog of repairs to these important transportation systems exists.

These are federal lands and their transportation systems are wholly dependent upon federal funding; they do not have the benefit of support from state or local funding mechanisms.

The seriousness of the maintenance backlog of our federal lands transportation systems was most recently documented in the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) **2013 Status of the Nation's**

Highways, Bridges, and Transit: Conditions & Performance report

(<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/2013cpr/>). Half of the overall maintenance backlog in national parks – approximately \$6 billion – is transportation-related, and the lack of sustainable funding for our national forest roads is closing public access and causing social, safety and environmental conflicts. The situation is highlighted by the condition of paved roads in national forests: 75% are rated in “fair” or “poor” condition by FHWA.

Our federal lands not only provide important recreation opportunities, they are central to a \$650 billion per annum outdoor industry and to the nation’s efforts to attract international visitors – about one in five international travelers visit national parks. The demand for access to these lands will only increase as the “gray wave” of baby boomers throng to the federal lands (every day for the next 19 years, 10,000 baby boomers will reach age 65.) These individuals represent 26 percent of the population—a population with age-related mobility issues approaching 85 million.

The Highway Trust Fund reauthorization must address the federal responsibility for providing safe access to our federal lands by providing adequate funds to meet and maintain public lands transportation systems, and our diverse coalition of recreation, conservation and tourism organizations asks for your action on this important issue. We are available and eager to discuss this topic with you.

Sincerely,

American Forests
American Hiking Society
American Recreation Coalition
American Whitewater
Association of Partners for Public Lands
Buffalo National River Partners
Coalition of National Park Service Retirees
The Corps Network
Destination Marketing Association International
Discover Your Northwest
Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House
Friends of Acadia
Friends of Big Bend National Park
Friends of The Cape Cod National Seashore
Friends of Dyke Marsh
Friends of Haleakala National Park
Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park
Friends of Minute Man National Park
Friends of the Oregon Caves and Chateau
Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes
Friends of the Smokies
Friends of Virgin Islands National Park
Grand Canyon Association
International Mountain Bicycling Association
Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association
Mount Rushmore Society

Natchez Convention and Visitor Bureau
National Parks Conservation Association
National Park Hospitality Association
National Tour Association
National Trust for Historic Preservation
Outdoor Alliance
Outdoor Industry Association
Pea Ridge National Military Park Foundation
Petrified Forest Museum Association
Public Lands Service Coalition
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Recreation Vehicle Industry Association
REI
Rocky Mountain Conservancy
The Sandy Hook Foundation
Sierra Club
Southeast Tourism Society
St. Croix River Association
Timucuan Trail Parks Foundation
Trust for Public Land
U.S. Cultural & Heritage Tourism Marketing Council
Western National Parks Association
Western States Tourism Policy Council
Wolf Trap Foundation
Yosemite Conservancy