



ENVIRONMENTAL ENTREPRENEURS®

The Independent Business Voice for the Environment

www.e2.org

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Dear Members of Congress:

As members of Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2) [i] we write in support of a transportation bill that improves economic efficiency and productivity through modernization of our transportation network to reduce its environmental impact. While our surface transportation network is extensive, it suffers severe deterioration from habitual under-funding, leaves 45 percent of Americans without access to public transportation and is responsible for more than 70 percent of the petroleum consumption and 27 percent of carbon pollution in the U.S. [ii] The next transportation bill should remedy these flaws by including provisions to reinvest in our crumbling infrastructure, encourage innovative approaches to growth, incentivize energy efficient transportation options for commuters, promote standards to prepare our system for the impacts of climate change and contribute less to the carbon pollution that is causing it.

As business leaders, we have a shared interest in a well-connected and highly-efficient U.S. transportation network as businesses of all types and sizes rely on America's transportation network to operate, compete, and grow. Unfortunately, underinvestment has left our transportation infrastructure in dire need of repair and rehabilitation.

The poor condition of our infrastructure makes transportation in America less efficient, less affordable, and less able to adapt to changing economic and environmental conditions. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates that \$3.6 trillion is needed over the next 5 years to improve the condition of the system. [iii] Even at that investment level, America would still lag behind infrastructure investment rates of many other nations that are our international competitors.

A modern, safe, and efficient transportation network that connects our nation's key regions, supports national economic goals, and reduces energy and oil use will support economic prosperity while reducing environmental impacts. Even as the nation tightens its belt to grapple with the deficit, we must commit to investing in transportation infrastructure to support this vision. More investment could help to reduce the backlog of needed repairs, and better planning could deliver more transportation choices to travelers while reducing traffic delays and the need for more car trips. These investments should be chosen to maximize tangible returns to American businesses and the economy as a whole.

To achieve this, we respectfully offer the following principles for America's next transportation bill.

Investment: Substantial funding is needed for maintaining, repairing and expanding our transportation system. Currently more than 46,000 bridges need repair, thousands of existing miles of highway need repair, and aging commuter rail and bus transits systems need to be upgraded to handle additional growth. A variety of funding mechanism are worthy of consideration and in some cases support. For example, the simplest way to meet the system's investment needs would be to increase the highway user fee and then peg it to inflation so the system remains properly funded. An additional option would be an upstream fee on barrels of oil. Both of these models keep in the tradition of relying mostly on user fees to fund the system.

Innovation: Rather than merely dole out all federal transportation funds by formula, our national

CALIFORNIA, PACIFIC NORTHWEST
& ROCKY MOUNTAINS
111 Sutter Street, Fl 20
San Francisco, CA 94104
TEL 415 875-6100 FAX 415 875-6161

NEW YORK & NEW ENGLAND
40 West 20th Street
New York, NY 10011
TEL 212 727-2700 FAX 212 727-1773

MID-ATLANTIC
1152 15th Street NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20005
TEL 202 289-6868 FAX 202 289-1060

MIDWEST
20 N Wacker Drive, Suite 1600
Chicago, IL 60606
TEL 312-663-9900 FAX 312-332-1908

program needs to spur competition, reward innovative proposals, identify and reward performance successes and share the lessons learned. Competitive programs like New Starts, Small Starts and the TIGER program have all proven successful at encouraging innovative, community led solutions with better performance outcomes. Other innovations like carsharing, ridesharing, bikesharing, electric vehicles, and networked vehicles can also be game-changers for transportation and deserve support from national policymakers to accelerate their integration into planning and programs. Such 21st-century innovations offer both fiscal and environmental benefits by making more efficient use of capacity.

Efficient Choices: As cities and suburbs develop and grow, traffic congestion increases. One way to provide relief, as well as access to jobs and amenities, is to deliver more efficient transportation choices for commuters and travelers which reduce travel time and pollution. For instance U.S. public transportation use saved 865 million hours in travel time in 2011 and a family that uses public transit instead of driving lowers their carbon emission footprint by 30 percent on average.[\[iv\]](#)[\[v\]](#) Companies are increasingly recruiting from a workforce that wants to bike to work and live in vibrant, walkable neighborhoods connected by transit. Small towns and large cities alike want reliable passenger and freight rail connections to regional economic hubs to move goods. While the precise mix of options will be determined by the needs of each local community, it is clear that one size no longer fits all, and federal programs must recognize that and begin factoring in changing demands and demographics. The next transportation bill should build and expand on the legacy of providing choices by investing equitably across modes of transportation.

Resiliency: Climate variability and change pose threats to U.S. transportation systems. The range of impacts from these threats may include roadway deterioration, flooding of tunnels and low-lying roadways, limited waterway access, and weakened structures. Severe conditions may reduce the life of capital assets and increase operational disruptions. The next transportation bill must require state and regional long range transportation plans to take into account the need to reduce risks from extreme weather events and create more resilient infrastructure.

Public Input: MAP-21 included 28 pages of provisions to undermine environmental reviews of transportation projects pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. This comprehensive and alarming overhaul leaves the public unable to properly weigh in on concerns about impacts transportation projects have on their communities leading to negative outcomes. The MAP-21 provisions are still being implemented and Congress should refrain from making more alterations to the review process before the outcomes of the previous changes are in place.

Incorporating these principles into a modern U.S. transportation policy will pay dividends for businesses and consumers across America. We urge Congress to focus on boosting investment, spurring innovation, delivering more options, increasing resiliency and increasing public input in the new transportation law. By following these principles we believe the next transportation bill can help build a 21st century system that makes America safer, cleaner, more secure, and more prosperous.

Sincerely,

Dan Abrams (California)
President/CEO, Wynkoop
Properties

Kathy Barry (California)
Psychotherapist

Caroline Bassett (New York)
Director, Bassett Media
Relations, LLC

Susan Goldhor
(Massachusetts)
Biologist, C.A.R.S.

Ken Goldsholl (California)
CEO, x.o.ware, Inc.

Nancy Goldsholl (California)
Lorena Gonda Kiralla
(California)

Larry Orr (California)
Managing Partner, Trinity
Ventures

Lyn Oswald (California)
E2 Membership Director

Carl Page (California)
Chief Technology Officer,
ZVUE Corp

Ed Beardsworth (California) Principal, Energy Technology Advisors

Dave Belote (Virginia) Senior Vice President, Cassidy and Associates

Laura Berland-Shane (California) Director, Utility Markets - West, Comverge

Eric Berman (Washington) Angel VC

Luann Berman (Washington)

Tony Bernhardt, PhD (California) Northern California Director, Environmental Entrepreneurs

Aron Bernstein (Massachusetts) Professor of physics, MIT

Marcella Bernstein (California)

Stuart Bernstein (California) Global Head, Clean Technology and Renewables and Venture Capital Coverage, Goldman Sachs

Loren Blackford (New York) Investor

Maureen Blanc (California) Director, CHARGE ACROSS TOWN

Barbara Blumenthal (New Jersey) Executive Coach, Leaders In Motion

Melissa Booth (North Carolina)

David Bowen (California) Consultant

Eric Bowen (California) Executive Director, Business Development & Legal Affairs, Renewable Energy Group

Bill Boyk (Oregon) CEO/Founder, GyroVolts by

Jon Gordon (Colorado) Managing Partner, Sheer Velocity, LLC

Vicki Gordon (Colorado)

Eric Grunebaum (Massachusetts) Chief Business Development Officer, Business Dev't. at TeraCool & Producer "The Last Mountain"

Melody Haller (California) Vice President Corporate Communications, Solexant Corp.

Berl Hartman (Massachusetts) E2 New England Chapter Director, Hartman Consulting

Hyman Hartman (Massachusetts) Research Scientist, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Carol Hazenfield (California) Communications Coach

Sheryl Heckmann (California) Events Coordinator, Law Foundation of Silicon Valley

Ward Hendon (California) Cofounder, Axiom Legal

Shiela Hingorani (California) First Vice President, Morgan Stanley

David Hitchcock (Virginia) Senior Vice President, Corporate Operations, Harvest Power

Wendy James (California) President, Better World Group

Charlene Kabcenell (California) Former Vice President, Oracle Corporation

Derry Kabcenell (California) Former Executive Vice

Peter Papesch (Massachusetts) Architect, Papesch Associates

Ga-Young Park (Illinois) Director, Cyclone Energy Group

Jen Parker (California) CEO, Canopy Cards

Vic Parker (California) Managing Director

Christopher Pribe (California)

Jennifer Regan (California) Principal and Chief Sustainability Officer, We Bring It On Inc

Grant Ricketts (California) Co-Founder and VP Business Development, Saba

David Rosenheim (California) Executive Director, The Climate Registry

Jackie Rosenheim (California)

David Rosenstein (California) President, Intex Solutions

Joan Rossetti (Massachusetts) Chair, Environmental Affairs Committee of the Prudential Center Residents' Association

Amy Roth (California)

Jacqueline Royce (Massachusetts) Independent Scholar

Paul Royce (Massachusetts) Independent Scholar

Bill Ryall (New York) Partner, Ryall Porter Sheridan Architects

John Santoleri (New York) Partner, StoneWork Capital

Ella Saunders (Massachusetts)

Tedd Saunders (Massachusetts) CSO, The Saunders Hotel Group

David Schwartz (California)

Ameristar Solar, LLC
Diane Boyk (Oregon)
Tim Brummels (California)
CEO, Canergy LLC
Barbara Brenner Buder (California)
CFO, San Francisco
Theological Seminary
Bob Burnett (California)
Retired, Cisco Systems
Dianne Callan (Massachusetts)
Independent Legal Consulting,
Green Tech Legal
John Cassidy (California)
Nancy Cassidy (California)
singer/songwriter,
Twittertwatter Music
Steve Chadima (California)
Senior Vice President,
Communications & Director of
California Initiatives, AEE
Advanced Energy Economy
Roger Choplin (California)
Proprietor / Owner, Our Earth
Music, Inc.
Simone Coxe (California)
Retired
Catherine Crystal Foster (California)
Mark Cunningham (California)
Andrew Currie (Colorado)
Investor, Active Minds LLC
John Cusack
Financial Services Risk
Management, Maplecroft
Limited
Mary Ann Cusenza (California)
Independent Consultant for
high tech and cleantech
companies
Vincent Cushing (Illinois)
President & CTO,
QCoefficient, Inc.

President, Oracle Corporation
Suparna Kadam (New Jersey)
Co-Founder & VP
Sales/Marketing, GreenRay
Jerome Kalur (Montana)
Attorney at Law
Christopher Kaneb (Massachusetts)
Principal, Catamount
Management Corporation
Marie Kent (Oregon)
Steven Kiralla (California)
Judy Klein (California)
Charly Kleissner (California)
Co-Founder, KL Felicitas
Foundation
Lisa Kleissner (California)
Co-Founder, KL Felicitas
Foundation
Stephen Koch (California)
Portfolio Manager, AIG Global
Real Estate
David Kolsrud (South Dakota)
President, DAK Renewable
Energy
Catherine Korsant (Florida)
Philip Korsant (Florida)
Managing Member, Korsant
Partners
Felix Kramer (California)
Founder, California Cars
Initiative
Chip Krauskopf (California)
Chief Operating Officer,
Chromasun Inc.
Pete Krull (North Carolina)
President and Founder, Krull &
Company
Sue Learned-Driscoll (California)
Administrator, Stanford
University
Nicole Lederer (California)
Chair and Co-Founder,

Lauren Scott (California)
Paul B. Scott (California)
Vice President, Advanced
Technologies, Transportation
Power Inc
Kathleen Seip (Virginia)
Lt Gen (ret) Noman Seip (Virginia)
Owner, NS Solutions, LLC
Tim Sexton (California)
Principal, Make Good Group
Reid Shane (California)
Producer/Partner, Frequency
Films
Rebecca Shaw (California)
Environmental Defense Fund
Barbara Simons (California)
Research Staff Member,
Retired, IBM Research
Jon Slangerup (California)
CEO, Port of Long Beach
Irene Stillings (California)
President, U.S. Green Chamber
of Commerce
Ed Supplee (California)
Former CFO, UTStarcom
Sally Supplee (California)
Former Chief Financial Officer,
various companies
Jim Sweeney (Massachusetts)
President, Sustainable New
Energy
Russ Teall (California)
President and Founder, Biodico
Trey Teall (California)
VP Operations, Biodico
Sven Thesen (California)
Communication & Technology,
Better Place
Todd Thorner (California)
CEO / Founder, JTN Energy
Craig Tighe (California)
Attorney, DLA Piper LLP (US)
Bill Unger (California)
Partner Emeritus, Mayfield
Fund

Jayne Davis (California)
Peter Davis (California)
 Retired Attorney
Rick DeGolia (California)
 Executive Chairman, Cimbal, Inc
Michael Delapa (California)
 DeLapa Consulting
Anne Delehunt (California)
 Marketing Consultant, Delehunt-Ricketts
Chris Dennett (Oregon)
 Manager, ACME Business Consulting
Heather Dennett (Oregon)
 Physical Therapist, Kaiser Permanente
John DeSantis (Massachusetts)
 Founder and President, Civic Capital Group, LLC
Ted Driscoll (California)
 Partner, Digital Healthcare Lead, Claremont Creek Ventures
Tim Dwight (California)
 Business Development, Integrated Power Corporation
Bethany Elmaleh (New York)
Niko Elmaleh (New York)
 Vice President, World-Wide Holdings Corp.
Bob Epstein (California)
 Co-founder, Sybase, New Resource Bank, Environmental Entrepreneurs
Christina Erickson (California)
 Managing Director, WONDROS
Rob Erlichman (California)
 Founder & President, Sunlight Electric, LLC
Lynn Feintech (California)
Anne Feldhusen (California)
 Consultant, Green Business Environmental Entrepreneurs
Rebecca Lee (California)
Rochelle Lefkowitz (California)
 President, Pro-Media Communications
Paul Logan (New York)
 Vice President, Jones Lang LaSalle
Tracy Lyons (California)
 Singer-Songwriter, Mythic Records LLC
Steve MacKay (California)
 Principal, Scourie Network Partners
Andrew Magee (Massachusetts)
 Senior Consultant, Epsilon Associates
Ughetta Manzone (California)
 Attorney-at-Law
Drew Maran (California)
 President, Drew Maran Construction, Inc.
James Marvin (Massachusetts)
 Regional Manager, North America East & Canada, Expeditors International of Washington Inc.
Joanna Marvin (Massachusetts)
 Owner, Federal Consulting Solutions
David Miller (Massachusetts)
 Executive Managing Director, Clean Energy Venture Group
Karen Miller (Massachusetts)
 President, Belly Shmooze
Kate Mitchell (California)
 Co-Founder and Partner, Scale Venture Partners
Wes Mitchell (California)
 Board Member, Foto Forum,
Amy Van Beek (Iowa)
 Co-founder, Designer, Ideal Energy, Inc.
Troy Van Beek (Iowa)
 President, Renewable Energy Expert, Ideal Energy, Inc.
Mark Vander Ploeg (California)
 Retired, Investment Banker
Aino Vieira da Rosa (California)
 Architect, Aino Maria Vieira Da Rosa, AIA
Alex Wall (Oregon)
 Attorney, Wall at Law
Jeffrey Weiss (Rhode Island)
 Member, Clean Energy Venture Group
Bonni Widdoes (Massachusetts)
 President, Gladden House
Clint Wilder (California)
 Contributing Editor, Clean Edge
Ellie Wilder (California)
Andrew Winston (Connecticut)
 Founder, Winston Eco-Strategies
Christine Winston (Connecticut)
Tonia Wisman (California)
Erik Wohlgemuth (Oregon)
 COO, Future 500
George Woodwell (Massachusetts)
 Founder and Director Emeritus, The Woods Hole Research Center
Katharine Woodwell (Massachusetts)
 Administrator-retired
George Yandell (California)
 Director of Real Estate, Nature Conservancy
Daniel Yost (California)
 Partner, Orrick, Herrington &

Technology Marketing

David Fischer

(Massachusetts)

Partner, Gold Hill Capital

Jon Foster (California)

Chief Financial Officer,

Nexant

Karen Francis (California)

CEO, Academix Direct, Inc

Nell Freudenberger (New York)

Author

Rona Fried (New York)

President,

SustainableBusiness.com

Bonnie Gemmell (California)

CEO, Spicer Bags

Rob Gemmell (California)

Co-founder, AlikeList

Jonathan Gensler (New York)

Vice President of Business

Development, EnerKnol

Nancy Gail Goebner (California)

Owner, Gardenpeach Place

Mitchell Golden (New York)

Principal, Jun Group

SFMOMA

Carol Moné (California)

Producer, Our Earth

Productions

Catherine Morrow

(Pennsylvania)

Jay Morrow (Pennsylvania)

Senior VP, AIG Property

Casualty

David Moyar (New York)

President & CEO, MEI Hotels

Inc.

Susan Nedell (Colorado)

Consultant

Armand Neukermans

(California)

Founder, Xros

Eliane Neukermans

(California)

Al Nierenberg

(Massachusetts)

President, Evergreen

Consulting & Training

Tori Nourafchan (California)

Graham Noyes (California)

Executive Director, Low

Carbon Fuels Coalition

Kathy Nyrop (California)

Consultant

Anne O'Grady (California)

Standish O'Grady

(California)

Managing Director, Granite

Ventures, LLC

David O'Leary (Maryland)

Technology Strategy, Better

World Telecom

Sutcliffe LLP

Margaret Zankel (California)

Martin Zankel (California)

Emeritus Chairman,

BartkoZankel

185 members

[ii](#) E2 is a nonpartisan, national community of business leaders who promote sound environmental policies that grow the economy. We are entrepreneurs, investors, and professionals from every sector of the economy who collectively have been involved in the financing, founding or

development of more than 1,700 companies that have created more than 570,000 jobs. Our members manage billions of dollars in venture and private equity capital that will flow over the next several years into new companies.

[ii] Grow America: Providing environmental protection, U.S. Department of Transportation, <http://www.dot.gov/grow-america/fact-sheets/environment> and Overview of Greenhouse Gases, U.S. Environmental Protection

Agency, <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/ghgemissions/gases/co2.html>

[iii] American Society of Civil Engineers. *Report Card for America's Infrastructure*. 2013

[iv] Public Transportation Benefits, American Public Transportation Association, <http://www.apta.com/mediacenter/ptbenefits/Pages/default.aspx>

[v] Public Transportation Reduces Greenhouse Gases and Conserves Energy, American Public Transportation Association,

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