November 2, 2015

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
2406 Rayburn House Office Building,
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Committee
2365 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Committee
503 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Lowey, Chairman Cochran, and Ranking Member Mikulski:

Now that a bipartisan and bicameral budget deal has been reached, we understand that you will be engaging in a process to re-determine the FY16 302(b) sub-committee appropriations allocations. We are writing to urge you to invest as robustly as possible in Transportation, Housing and Urban Development.

While we recognize that there are no easy choices to be made in the budget and appropriations 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."*

In 2013, 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 2014/2015 Report ranks our infrastructure 16th in the world, down dramatically from its 7th place ranking just 7 years ago.

As the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee stated during the passage of the Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015, *"By 2039 the U.S. population will exceed 400 million and the population concentration in our urban areas is increasing. Transportation solutions for these people are paramount in order to support an expanding U.S. economy. The costs of congestion and poor transportation infrastructure continue to rise for commuters: almost $121 billion each year is wasted in* *time and fuel, up from only $24 billion in 1982. In addition, Americans spend a staggering 5.5 billion hours annually stuck in traffic."*

And as the Senate EPW Committee wrote in its introduction of the DRIVE Act, transportation infrastructure *"investments will create new jobs, provide a sustained boost to our nation's economy, and keep America competitive in the global marketplace."*

The most recent data and analyses from the Department of the Treasury and the Council of Economic Advisors "*Confirmed and strengthened their findings that now is an ideal time to increase our investment in infrastructure for the following four key reasons:*

- *Well-designed infrastructure investments have long-term economic benefits and create jobs in the short run;*
- *This economic activity and job creation is especially timely as there is currently a high level of underutilized resources that can be used to improve and expand our infrastructure;*
- *Middle-class Americans would benefit disproportionately from this investment through both the creation of middle-class jobs and by lowering transportation costs for American households; and*
- *There is strong demand by the public and businesses for additional transportation infrastructure capacity."*

The OneRail Coalition intends to work with the THUD sub-committees to urge the maximum possible funding be allocated to the following accounts, but as you know their ability to invest in these critical programs will be dependent on the allocations received:

- Amtrak capital and operating support, which is used to
  - maintain existing equipment and infrastructure;
  - invest in improvements that support faster, more frequent and more reliable service;
  - replace the aging fleet of locomotives and passenger rail cars;
  - fund safety and security projects;
  - improve station accessibility under requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act; and
  - support the continued operation of the national intercity long distance passenger rail network and the state-supported short distance routes.

  Amtrak continues to set ridership records on both its highly visible Northeast Corridor and across the country on their state-supported services and long distance trains, and its improved performance now enables it to meet 93 percent of its operating costs. However, the Amtrak-owned system is in decay, infrastructure is deteriorating, and Congress must increase its investment in Amtrak so that passenger rail can continue to contribute to our national economy.

- Capital assistance to the States for intercity passenger rail service, which will be used by States to accelerate ongoing projects and to advance other projects for which planning and environmental work is nearing completion. The Passenger Rail Reform and Investment Act of 2015 (PRRIA), which passed the House by a vote of 316-101 on March 4, 2015 and the DRIVE Act, which passed the Senate 65-34 on July 30, 2015, both authorized similar programs of National Infrastructure and Safety Investments.

- Competitive, merit-based, TIGER Grants, which enable States and local governments to build innovative multi-modal and multi-jurisdictional projects, frequently in partnership with significant private contributions. These types of projects are very difficult to fund through traditional programs. Since 2009, the TIGER program has provided nearly $4.6 billion to 381 projects in all 50 states – including 133 projects to support rural and tribal communities. Demand for the program has been overwhelming with more than 6,600 applications requesting more than $134 billion for transportation projects across the country.

- New Starts/Small Starts Capital Investment Grants, which are used throughout the country to leverage local investments to build and expand commuter rail, light rail, and heavy rail systems. There is tremendous demand for these rail systems – in the most recently reported year, passenger trips grew to 4.8 billion trips year and passenger miles grew by 5.6 percent to 31.2 billion, or more than 85 million passenger miles every single day. Nine projects are already in the existing New Starts Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) process, six are in the New Starts Engineering phase, and a full 40 additional projects are in the Project Development phase. $2.881b for FY2016 would be required just to fund the Existing and Recommended New Starts, Small Starts, and Core Capacity projects.

The OneRail Coalition believes that rail is a crucial component of an efficient transportation network that allows people and goods to move quickly and safety to their destinations, enhancing productivity, creating jobs, and allowing America to remain the largest and best functioning economy in the world. A smooth logistics system with intermodal connectivity and without major chokepoints also strengthens our exporters' ability to compete in the global economy.

The nation's privately owned freight railroads are investing billions in their own infrastructure and equipment – over $29 billion planned in 2015 and more than $575 billion total since 1980. While this will continue, public investments in rail transportation infrastructure are also critical to spur economic growth and encourage new business development, which will add new jobs and expand employment opportunities throughout the nation. Investment in rail infrastructure also supports hundreds of thousands of good-paying private sector rail supply and service jobs throughout the country. The record is clear that rail is safe, productive, efficient, and environmentally sustainable, and that rail promotes energy independence and contributes positively to public health and well-being.

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 Appropriations Committees to take a leadership role on this national priority.

###

For further information, contact:
Anne Canby, Director
OneRail Coalition
acanby@onerail.org
202-466-2641
www.onerail.org

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)**, International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail, and Transportation Workers – United Transportation Union **(SMART-UTU)**, National Association of Railroad Passengers **(NARP)**, National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association **(NRC)**, Railway Supply Institute **(RSI)**, States for Passenger Rail Coalition **(S4PRC)**, Surface Transportation Policy Partnership **(STPP)**, and the Transportation Communications International Union/International Association of Machinists **(TCU/IAM)**.

Our Associate Supporters include **AECOM**, **Alstom**, **Caterpillar, General Electric**, **HNTB**, **Parsons**, **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.