

2026 Surface Transportation Reauthorization

United Perspectives from Michigan

January 23, 2026

The Honorable Gary Peters
United States Senator
Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Peters,

Surface transportation reauthorization plays a critical role in determining how federal transportation funds are distributed, directly shaping long-term infrastructure investments in Michigan and across the country. The current multi-year authorization—the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021—enabled transportation and infrastructure agencies in Michigan to make progress in addressing the state's aging and deteriorating infrastructure after decades of underinvestment.

The IIJA is scheduled to expire on September 30, 2026. This reauthorization presents an opportunity to sustain and build upon the progress the State of Michigan has made in the past few years. The following public and private organizations stand united in their support of continued federal investment in Michigan's transportation network.

- **The Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)** is a federally recognized Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) serving the seven-county region of Southeast Michigan. In a region that's home to 58% of Michigan's economic activity and nearly half the population, SEMCOG plays a crucial role in transportation planning by coordinating infrastructure investments across jurisdictions to create a safe and sustainable transportation network in Southeast Michigan.
- **The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT)** is responsible for Michigan's nearly 10,000-mile state highway system. It is the backbone of Michigan's 120,000-mile highway, road, and street network. Additionally, MDOT manages state and federal programs for aeronautics, intercity passenger services, rail freight, public transit, and nonmotorized transportation.
- **The Detroit Regional Chamber** serves as the leading voice of business across Southeast Michigan's 11-county region. Dedicated to fostering a business-friendly climate and driving economic growth, the Chamber plays a pivotal role in shaping the region's economic landscape. It also leads MichAuto, Michigan's only automotive and mobility association, which is committed to promoting, retaining, and expanding the state's signature industry.

SEMCOG, MDOT, and the Detroit Regional Chamber each represent unique sectors of the state but share the following common goals for the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization.

1. Ensure Michigan's Transportation Network Continues to Receive Adequate Funding

Michigan's transportation network is the backbone of the state's economy, supporting the mobility of residents and industry. Ensuring that Michigan continues to receive adequate funding through surface transportation reauthorization is critical to maintaining and improving this infrastructure. Federal, state, and local transportation resources must be fully leveraged to meet the diverse and evolving needs of the entire state—from urban centers to rural communities.

It is imperative that Michigan competes for and secures its fair share of all available funding sources, including both formula and discretionary funds. This includes advocating for equitable distribution mechanisms that recognize Michigan's unique infrastructure challenges. A sustained commitment to funding in the Great Lakes state will help address the backlog of deferred maintenance and support long-term growth.

2. Implement Stable Funding and Funding Distributions that Support Long-Term Investment

For communities, contractors, and transportation agencies to effectively plan and deliver the multi-year, comprehensive projects needed across Michigan, the next surface transportation reauthorization bill must prioritize long-term, sustainable investment strategies. Stable funding not only allows for better project planning and execution but also improves cost efficiency, reduces delays, and enhances overall infrastructure outcomes.

The bill should strike a thoughtful balance between formula funding—which is predictable, flexible, and low in administrative burden—and discretionary grants, which are highly competitive and often needed to fund large projects or pilot initiatives that exceed the limitations of the current formula programs. This balance is critical to ensuring equitable access to funding across the state. Additionally, the dedicated revenue streams that support transportation investments—particularly the Highway Trust Fund—must be safeguarded and modernized to ensure their long-term solvency. Without stability in funding, Michigan and the rest of the country will be forced to delay vital investments in infrastructure and mobility.

3. Advance Transportation Safety

Reauthorization should focus on supporting proven safety programs that save lives, reduce injuries, and improve overall system performance. This includes continued funding for initiatives aimed at making roadways safer for all users, including vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists.

Specifically, three programs that have spurred additional investments in safety should be bolstered. The Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) is administered by state departments of transportation and aims to improve visibility, reduce roadway

departure crashes, and enable data-driven assessments that mitigate future incidents. The Transportation Alternatives Program, though a modest investment, plays a critical role in supporting multimodal transportation projects that enhance safety, reliability, mobility, and accessibility—particularly for vulnerable road users. The Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Program is a competitive funding opportunity available to state departments of transportation, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and local governments for planning, demonstration, or implementation projects aimed at improving roadway safety and reducing traffic-related fatalities and serious injuries. Given the success of SS4A, transitioning it into a formula program would ensure the resulting improvements in safety outcomes could be both maintained and expanded upon.

4. Prioritize State and Regional Planning Efforts

Planning is the foundation of effective project delivery. Through planning, transportation partners tackle regional and statewide issues affecting the transportation network, such as safety and flooding. Regional transportation planning plays a vital role in ensuring national expertise guides state, regional, and local decision-making. It ensures local governments understand federal and state programs and advocate for important local initiatives. The benefits of planning are gained through smooth project delivery, where stakeholders and the public are engaged in the process. Coordinated planning also results in critical cost savings, especially during construction.

To fully realize the benefits of planning, the reauthorization bill should include implementation tools and resources that enable planning organizations and their partners to transition proposed projects into delivered ones.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our priorities for the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization. We are eager to see the progress that can be achieved in rebuilding and modernizing Michigan's transportation infrastructure by advancing the shared interests outlined above. We look forward to working collaboratively with private and federal, state, and local public partners to ensure that Michigan remains competitive and connected.

Sincerely,



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