

November 8, 2011

Bicycling and Walking Organizations Respond to MAP-21



The America Bikes coalition – representing the nation’s leading bicycling and walking groups – today expressed their appreciation for the continued inclusion of funding opportunities for biking and walking in MAP-21.



America Bikes remains deeply concerned, however, that bicycling and walking programs suffer disproportionate cuts in funding in the new bill, and that significant additional activities are made eligible for these limited funds. We remain committed to working with the EPW Committee and full Senate to resolve these issues, especially in the light of the Senate's continued, strong bi-partisan support for bicycle and pedestrian funding as shown in several recent votes on the Senate floor.



The process of honoring the public’s strong support for these programs begins immediately with amendments that have been introduced already by Senate supporters of dedicated funding for non-motorized transportation.



Specific concerns include:

1. The current dedicated funding programs for bicycling and walking are combined into one program, with significantly less funding;
2. An expanded list of eligible activities are added to this smaller funding pot, including such big-ticket items as NEPA compliance and land acquisition for wetland mitigation; and
3. The proposed bill effectively allows states to completely opt out of the program and would allow all this money to be redirected to highway construction.



The America Bikes coalition calls on the leaders of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee to restore dedicated funding for bicycling and walking in MAP-21 and remove the opt-out provision that would encourage States to eliminate funding for these two modes altogether.



The Benefits of Biking and Walking



From San Francisco to Bentonville, Arkansas, and from Oklahoma City to New York City, communities are increasingly investing in bicycling and walking infrastructure and programs to support popular, healthy and cost-effective transportation. These investments – made possible by dedicated federal transportation dollars – are working:

- Commuting trips by bike have increased nationwide by more than 40% since 2000; bicycling and walking now account for 12% of all trips in the United States.
- Thousands of Safe Routes to School programs are reducing congestion and improving safety in communities across the country.
- Recreational trails are heavily used and provide crucial economic benefits, especially in rural communities.



A transportation bill designed to efficiently move America in this new century should continue to include dedicated funding to create safe and accessible places for people to bike and walk. Since 2005, a total of just 1.5 percent of annual federal transportation funding has been devoted to supporting these activities. Biking and walking not only comprise more than 12 percent of all trips but also account for 14% of annual traffic fatalities.

Dedicated funding for bicycling and walking projects – one or two cents of every dollar – is a time-tested, popular, and effective approach to building a truly multi-modal national transportation system that offers choice, safety and access for all. Increasing the safety and use of non-motorized transportation reduces congestion, saves lives and money, protects the environment...and creates more jobs per million dollars of investment than highway-only projects: exactly what MAP-21 should be trying to do.

Dedicated funding for bicycling and walking enjoys broad support at all levels of Government. Less than one week ago, 60 Senators voted in bi-partisan support of preserving the Transportation Enhancement program – the third such vote in support of the program this year. At the state level, transportation enhancement, safe routes to school and recreational trails programs typically receive at least three times more requests for funding than is available. In May, a survey by the U.S. Conference of Mayors showed solid support among Mayors for funding of bicycling and walking infrastructure.

America Bikes is a coalition of leaders from the bicycle community advocating for positive outcomes for bicycling in the federal transportation bill.

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