

February 16, 2026

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chair
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chair
Committee on Environment & Public Works
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment & Public Works
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs Graves and Capito and Ranking Members Larsen and Whitehouse:

On behalf of the undersigned state associations of counties and city municipal leagues – representing thousands of counties, cities, towns, villages, parishes and boroughs and their hundreds of thousands of locally elected officials across America – we write to thank you for your continued bipartisan leadership on the next surface transportation reauthorization bill **and to include the bipartisan *BASICS (Bridges And Safety Infrastructure for Community Success) Act (H.R. 7437)* provisions in the next surface transportation reauthorization bill.** This legislation is critical to sustaining long-term investment in the transportation infrastructure that connects our communities, support local economies and enables national competitiveness.

As Congress develops the next authorization bill, it is essential local governments are fully and meaningfully included as principal stakeholders. **Local governments are not nominal partners in the transportation system – we are the first and last mile of nearly every trip made in America, and we are the majority owners of the nation’s transportation systems.** We own and maintain the majority share of the nation’s transportation assets, including 75 percent of all public road miles, 43 percent of Federal-aid highway miles and almost 50 percent of bridges on the National Bridge Inventory. We own, operate or fund almost all public transit and commuter rail systems. We also operate major airports, seaports and multimodal facilities that are essential to commerce, emergency response and daily mobility.

The local governments we represent vary widely in size, geography and governance, but they share a core responsibility: maintaining safe, reliable and resilient transportation systems with limited and often constrained local revenue. **To meet our shared goal of improving infrastructure and directing investment where it is needed most, the next surface transportation reauthorization must deliver federal formula funding fairly based on the ownership and the national goals of the system including condition, performance and safety.**

While local responsibilities differ across states and regions, there are three common, essential priorities we collectively urge Congress to advance in the next bill, each of which aligns closely with the BASICS Act.

Local Partnership: As the level of government closest to our shared constituents, local governments are best positioned to identify which transportation investments will deliver the greatest benefit on the ground. Even in states where local governments own a smaller share of road miles, local partnership on project selection aligns transportation with community needs and ensures investments are made strategically and efficiently. Given the scale of federal surface transportation programs, it is essential that a meaningful share of these funds are subject to strong local control. To do this, Congress should:

1. Expand the suballocated share of Federal-aid Highway Program formula funding, including by growing the most flexible formula program – the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) – and adding suballocation requirements to other programs; and
2. Strengthen project selection processes to ensure that regional planning organizations, in both urban and rural areas, can effectively access and program available funds.
3. Preserve discretionary funding programs with a strong local nexus, such as the Safe Streets, BUILD and the Railroad Crossing Elimination grant programs to advance discrete, high-impact projects that fall outside traditional formula structures.

Safety First: Local governments strongly agree that safety must be a top priority for the transportation system. Local elected officials know where dangerous intersections persist, where crash patterns are worsening and where targeted, low-cost investments can save lives. The Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program under the IIJA has been transformative in giving local governments access to federal dollars for local safety work, from developing safety action plans to deploying proven solutions that are actively keeping residents safe.

We urge Congress to retain SS4A in the next bill and maintain strong authorization levels to build on its early success. In addition, Congress should consider adding local suballocation provisions to the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), giving local governments predictable, formula-based funding to address urgent needs and advance traffic safety goals in our communities.

Rebuild Bridges: Local governments play a role in bridge ownership and maintenance in every state in the country. In many states, particularly in the Great Plains, the Midwest and the South, local ownership of bridges exceeds 70 percent. Yet decades of underinvestment in locally owned bridges has resulted in a clear disparity in the condition of locally owned and state-owned bridges. According to the 2025 Federal Highway Administration's National

Bridge Inventory, 8.8 percent of locally owned bridges are classified as being in “poor condition,” which is twice the 4.3 percent of state-owned bridges that meet that criteria.¹

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act made historic investments in bridge infrastructure through the Bridge Formula Program, the discretionary Bridge Investment Program and increased funding for the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) with its off-system bridge set-aside. However, because the Bridge Formula Program lacked a suballocation requirement, its \$27.5 billion in funding has remained largely inaccessible to local governments.

As Congress develops the next surface transportation reauthorization bill, we urge the continuation of a formula bridge program paired with a suballocation requirement to ensure meaningful improvement to both local and state-owned bridges. Suballocation levels could even be calibrated based on local ownership within each state, allowing states with limited local ownership to retain control while ensuring local governments in high-ownership states receive an appropriate share. Congress should also preserve the off-system bridge set-aside under the STBG program and strengthen local access to these funds through strong local control provisions.

As Congress works on reauthorization legislation, local governments across the country urge you to include these core provisions from the BASICS Act in your legislation to ensure a baseline level of access to America’s local governments in the next surface transportation reauthorization bill.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued bipartisan work on this reauthorization bill. Local leaders across America stand ready to help with implementation of a strong transportation bill that will make continued, necessary investments in our nation’s infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Alaska Municipal League

Association of County Commissions of
Alabama

League of Arizona Cities and Towns

Arkansas Municipal League

Association of Arkansas Counties

League of California Cities

California State Association of Counties

Colorado Municipal League

¹ For these purposes, locally owned bridges includes bridges whose owner is a county, town, city, local park, other local agency, including local toll authorities. Similarly, state-owned bridges includes bridges owned by states, state parks, other state agencies and state toll authorities.

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| Colorado Counties, Inc. | Connecticut Conference of Municipalities |
| Delaware League of Local Governments | Delaware Association of Counties |
| Florida League of Cities | Florida Association of Counties |
| Georgia Municipal Association | Association County Commissioners of Georgia |
| Hawaii State Association of Counties | Association of Idaho Cities |
| Idaho Association of Counties | Illinois Municipal League |
| Illinois State Association of Counties | Accelerate Indiana Municipalities |
| Indiana Association of Counties | Iowa League of Cities |
| Iowa State Association of Counties | League of Kansas Municipalities |
| Kansas Association of Counties | Kentucky Association of Counties |
| Police Jury Association of Louisiana | Maine Municipal Association |
| Maryland Association of Counties | Massachusetts Municipal League |
| Michigan Municipal League | Michigan Association of Counties |
| League of Minnesota Cities | Association of Minnesota Counties |
| Mississippi Association of Supervisors | Missouri Association of Counties |
| Missouri Municipal League | Montana League of Cities and Towns |
| Montana Association of Counties | Nebraska Association of Counties |
| Nevada Association of Counties | New Hampshire Municipal Association |
| New Jersey State League of Municipalities | New Jersey Association of Counties |
| New Mexico Association of Counties | New York State Association of Counties |
| North Carolina League of Municipalities | North Dakota League of Cities |

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| North Dakota State Association of Counties | Ohio Municipal League |
| County Commissioners Association of Ohio | Association of County Commissioners of Oklahoma |
| League of Oregon Cities | Association of Oregon Counties |
| Pennsylvania Municipal League | County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania |
| Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns | Municipal Association of South Carolina |
| South Dakota Municipal League | South Dakota Association of County Commissioners |
| Tennessee County Services Association | Texas Municipal League |
| Texas Association of Counties | Utah League of Cities and Towns |
| Utah Association of Counties | Vermont League of Cities and Towns |
| Virginia Association of Counties | Association of Washington Cities |
| Washington State Association of Counties | West Virginia Association of Counties |
| Wisconsin Counties Association | Wyoming Association of Municipalities |
| Wyoming County Commissioners Association | |