

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF  
STATE HIGHWAY AND  
TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS

**AASHTO**  
THE VOICE OF TRANSPORTATION

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March 14, 2012

The Honorable John L. Mica  
Chairman  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, III  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
2163 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John J. Duncan, Jr.  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit  
2207 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit  
2134 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bill Shuster  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Railroads  
204 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Corrine Brown  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Railroads  
2336 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

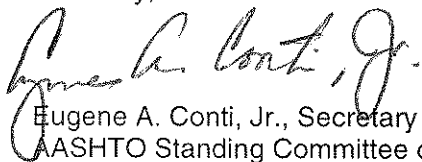
Dear Representatives:

The purpose of this letter is to encourage the Congress to support amendments to the surface transportation legislation that would provide additional flexibility to states by eliminating the three-year restriction on the use of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) funding for operating intercity passenger rail service. The primary purpose of the CMAQ program is to fund transportation projects that reduce air pollution emissions in areas designated by the Environmental Protection Agency as non-attainment or maintenance with respect to a National Ambient Air Quality Standard.

Current policy restricts use of CMAQ funding to offset operating costs for a period of three years; however, the beneficial impacts of intercity passenger rail services are a proven and eligible tool in improving air quality. These projects not only meet initial program eligibility criteria, but the emissions benefits sustain and increase over time as ridership grows.

State-sponsored intercity passenger trains continue to have the highest rate of ridership growth of any trains operated by Amtrak and last year comprised 48 percent of all intercity passenger trips. As Congress shifts more responsibility to the states to plan, design, finance, construct, maintain, procure equipment, contract for operation, and manage these services, states need to have the flexibility to use CMAQ funds for this ongoing purpose.

Sincerely,



Eugene A. Conti, Jr., Secretary NCDOT and Chairman  
AASHTO Standing Committee on Rail Transportation

cc: Kurt Steudle, P. E., President and John Horsley, Executive Director, AASHTO  
Paula Hammond, Secretary, WSDOT  
Ray LaHood, Secretary, USDOT