



**March 17, 2015**

The Honorable Tom Price  
Chair, House Budget Committee  
207 Cannon House Office Building,  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Enzi  
Chair, Senate Budget Committee  
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building,  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen  
Ranking Member, House Budget Committee  
B71 Cannon House Office Building,  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bernard Sanders  
Ranking Member, Senate Budget Committee  
624 Dirksen Senate Office Building,  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Price, Chairman Enzi, Ranking Member Van Hollen, and Ranking Member Sanders,

As you prepare your FY 2016 budget resolutions and set priorities for our nation, we are writing to urge you to invest as robustly as possible in the domestic discretionary side of the budget, which includes support for transportation and infrastructure investments.

While we recognize that there are no easy choices to be made in the budget 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 16<sup>th</sup> in the world, down dramatically from its 7<sup>th</sup> 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.”*

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

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**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 (**ASLRRRA**), **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**), Sheet Metal Workers International Association (**SMWIA**), and the Transportation Communications International Union/International Association of Machinists (**TCU/IAM**).

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