

July 10, 2014

Senator Pat Toomey
248 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Toomey:

The undersigned community leaders and organizations are writing to express our concern regarding your proposal to eliminate funding for the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

We understand that you have submitted an amendment to the Protecting America's Transit and Highways Act, currently before the Senate Finance Committee, to prevent any Highway Trust Fund dollars from being spent on TAP.

TAP is a critical part of federal infrastructure spending which provides for, among other things, on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities for both transportation and recreation. The range of eligible projects includes commuter trails, sidewalks, safety measures for non-motorized users, bike paths, safe routes to school, recreational trails, and non-vehicular transportation facilities that accommodate individuals with disabilities.

Federal funds through the TAP program complement and support other federal, state, and local transportation spending and allow local jurisdictions to ensure our transportation infrastructure works more effectively and efficiently. TAP is the most important, cost-effective resource Pennsylvanians have to promote economic revitalization and public health through trails and other bike/ped infrastructure. Since half of all trips taken in the United States are within a 20-minute bike ride, and a quarter of all trips taken in the United States are within a 20-minute walk, TAP funds build networks that reduce the number of automobile trips taken. The federal funds that come through TAP provide critical support and flexible options for state and local governments to ensure that transportation choices are available to all types of users.

The TAP program helps make federal transportation funds work more efficiently by:

- Shifting short automobile trips to walking and bicycling and enabling people who are willing to walk or bike to leave their cars at home, accommodating people who are unable to drive due to age or disability, and providing easier connections to transit without the need to drive;
- Building rail-trails and connecting existing trails and pedestrian and bicycle pathways in a way that expands our transit network at comparatively little cost while moving people around more efficiently;
- Providing safe routes for our children to get to school;
- Enhancing our transportation network in a way that has minimal impact on the environment;
- Promoting active tourism and improving the economy of towns in rural areas throughout the state through high quality and expanded trail systems, turnouts, overlooks and viewing areas;
- Promoting public health and exercise in a way that reduces health care costs for individuals and insurance costs for private employers; and
- Preserving, rehabilitating, and recycling historic transportation facilities for contemporary use.

TAP also houses the Recreational Trails Program which returns a portion of the gas tax paid by off-road recreational vehicles to the states for trail development, maintenance, and correction of environmentally damaging trail treads.

We oppose the elimination of TAP funds, and ask that you please refrain from introducing your amendment. We encourage you to work with us to find ways to more efficiently and effectively use federal funds to promote an effective transportation and trail networks. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tom Sexton, Director,
Northeast Regional Office
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Harrisburg

Marc Berejka, Director,
Government & Community Affairs
REI
Bedford, Conshohocken, Pittsburgh and Settlers Ridge

CC:

Senator Bob Casey
Representative Robert Brady
Representative Chaka Fattah
Representative Mike Kelly
Representative Scott Perry
Representative Glenn Thompson
Representative Jim Gerlach
Representative Patrick Meehan
Representative Michael G. Fitzpatrick

Representative Bill Shuster
Representative Tom Marino
Representative Lou Barletta
Representative Keith Rothfus
Representative Allyson Schwartz
Representative Mike Doyle
Representative Charlie Dent
Representative Joe Pitts
Representative Matt Cartwright
Representative Tim Murphy

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Jane Sheffield, President
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Oil Region National Heritage Area
Lumber Heritage Region (*see below*)
PA Route 6 Heritage Corridor
Lackawanna Heritage Valley (*see below*)
Endless Mountains
Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Corridor
Schuylkill River National & State Heritage Area
Susquehanna Gateway Heritage Area (*see below*)
Allegheny Ridge Heritage Area (*see below*)
Lincoln Highway Heritage Corridor
Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area
National Heritage Road Corridor (*see below*)



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