Dorval R. Carter, Jr.
President
Chicago Transit Authority

567 West Lake Street
Chicago, Illinois 60661

November 3, 2015

The Honorable Daniel Lipinski
U.S. House of Representatives
2346 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Lipinski:

I am writing to you in support of the Lipinski-Nadler-Dold Amendment (#110) to Section 3005 of HR 3763, the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015. This amendment would strike provisions in the bill that prohibit certain U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) funding and financing from being paired with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5309 Capital Investment Grants to construct New Starts, Small Starts, and Core Capacity Projects. Specifically, provisions in Section 3005 would limit the use of DOT funding from programs such as Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ), Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER), and the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) from being utilized on projects such as the CTA's Red-Purple Modernization project or the Red Line Extension to 130th Street.

For decades many transit agencies nationwide have been pairing various DOT funding with FTA Capital Investment Grant funding. This includes flexible funding from the CMAQ program that is allocated at the regional level by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Here in Chicago the MPO – known as the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) – has a yearly competitive process for CMAQ funding that is based on cost-benefit analysis with regard to a decrease in traffic congestion and an improvement in air quality. In 2015 the CTA's Red-Purple Modernization Core Capacity project was allocated $125 million in multi-year CMAQ funding, but H.R. 3763's provisions would jeopardize that funding from being paired with future FTA funding. So in essence, the provision as currently written takes away local control over federal funding that was already allocated to the region.

The CTA also has a history of successfully tapping low-cost TIFIA loan financing for large projects such as the Your New Blue Program on the CTA's Blue Line from downtown to O'Hare and the 95th Street Red Line Terminal Improvement project. To prohibit CTA from considering TIFIA financing for the aforementioned Red-Purple Modernization Project and Red Line Extension would take away an important and cost-effective tool in the financing toolbox and would lead to higher financing costs for these projects through traditional methods.

Thank you for offering this very important amendment during Committee markup and for floor consideration. The CTA was heartened to hear Chairman Shuster offer to work with you and your colleagues during the Committee consideration of the bill, and the CTA and likely many transit agencies around the region and country will benefit from your efforts should your amendment be adopted into the bill.

Sincerely,

Dorval R. Carter, Jr.
President

November 4, 2015

Regional Transportation Authority
175 W. Jackson Blvd,
Suite 1650
Chicago, IL 60604
312-913-3200
rtachicago.org

The Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) system provides more than two million rides per weekday. As the agency responsible for fiscal oversight, as well as financial and regional planning for public transit in Northeastern Illinois, I am writing in strong support of amendment #110 to Section 3005 of HR 3763, the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015. This amendment would restore the 80 percent federal share for core capacity and small starts projects, as well as allow New Starts projects to continue to use congestion mitigation and air quality improvement program funds (CMAQ), transportation infrastructure finance and innovation act (TIFIA) funds, and Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant funds as a part of the remaining Government share.

Amendment #110 benefits all three of our region's agencies -- CTA, Metra and Pace -- by allowing them to pair Capital Investment Grant funds with others federal program funds; a practice that has historically been allowed under federal programs. An example of the importance of this flexibility was seen when the CTA recently used a low-cost TIFIA loan as part of the project matching funds to finance the Your New Blue Program on the Blue Line from downtown to O'Hare and the 95th Street Red Line Terminal Improvement project. To prohibit the CTA from having the flexibility to use TIFIA financing, CMAQ dollars or TIGER funding as part of the local match for these projects would take away important and cost-effective financing and funding tools which could lead to higher costs if only left with other traditional methods.

In an era of scarce funding, the RTA and Service Boards try to creatively pursue all options from state, federal, and local sources for major projects. We appreciate Congress allowing local entities maximum flexibility to continue to do that. If you have any other questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 312-913-3221.

Sincerely,

L. Redden

Leanne Redden
Executive Director
Regional Transportation Authority

AMERICAN
PUBLIC
TRANSPORTATION
ASSOCIATION

November 3, 2015

The Honorable Daniel Lipinski
United States House of Representatives
2346 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Lipinski:

On behalf of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and its more than 1,500 member organizations, we are writing in support of the Lipinski, Nadler, Dold amendment #110 to the transportation provisions of the House Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform (STRR) Act, which would restore the 80 percent federal share for core capacity and small starts projects, as well as allow New Starts projects to continue to use congestion mitigation and air quality improvement program funds (CMAQ), transportation infrastructure finance and innovation act (TIFIA) funds, and Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant funds as a part of the remaining Government share.

While we are disappointed that surface transportation program (STP) funds continue to be restricted for new starts projects only, we recognize that this amendment was compromise language and improves the House bill. However, notwithstanding our support of this compromise position to improve the House bill, we will continue to advocate to preserve the current 80 percent Federal share for New Starts projects and the existing flexibility to use STP for the government share as the final position in a future conference between the House and the Senate.

Thank you again for your leadership on this issue. We look forward to continuing to work with you on restoring the federal share to 80 percent federal share for new starts and restoring STP flexibility to the new starts program as the House bill moves to conference. If you have any questions, please have your staff contact Brian Tynan of APTA's Government Affairs Department at (202) 496-4897 or email btynan@apta.com.

Sincerely,

Michael P. Melaniphy
President & CEO

CC: The Honorable Jerrold Nadler
The Honorable Robert Dold

1300 I Street, N.W., Suite 1200 East Washington, DC 20005 Phone (202) 496-4800 FAX (202) 496-4324 www.apta.com