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TRANSPORTATION FOR AMERICA ISSUES CALL TO PRESIDENT OBAMA AND CONGRESS TO LAUNCH A NEW FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION MISSION

WASHINGTON- With the federal transportation program set to expire later this year, the Transportation for America coalition brought together leaders in the worlds of transportation, public health, business and social justice to release a groundbreaking national campaign platform. The platform calls on President Obama and Congress to launch a new federal transportation mission that breaks with the worn out ways of the status quo, helps put an end to America's oil dependency, brings opportunity to all Americans and allows our country's businesses to compete and thrive in the 21st Century.

As debate opens on the next transportation spending bill, a poll released today by the National Association of Realtors and Transportation for America found that the American people overwhelmingly favor a more diverse and smarter portfolio of investments in public transportation, walking and biking, and strongly prefer to repair and maintain our roads before we build more of them. Nearly a third support expansion and improvement of bus, rail, and other public transportation options as a top national priority, while 16 percent said the same for expanding highways.

The event featured a robust panel discussion on how the Obama-Biden administration and Congress can commit to robust and forward thinking change by replacing the expiring SAFETEA-LU — our current, 1950s-era federal transportation program — with an investment in the clean, smart and efficient transportation infrastructure critical to our future.

"Accessible, affordable transportation is essential to expanding economic opportunity for all people," said Judith Bell, president of PolicyLink. "Targeted investments that expand public transit and create walkable, bikeable communities offer a triple bottom-line return — creating living-wage jobs, providing a vital link between low-income Americans and job centers, and improving health by reducing congestion and our carbon footprint. The nation must commit to bringing reliable, responsible transportation options to all communities."

"The transportation system our society builds drives our economic and real estate growth," said Chris Leinberger, president of Locus, an organization of forward-thinking real estate developers. "The development of the Interstate highway network over the past half century was appropriate for the time. A more balanced approach today, including far more transit, biking and pedestrian systems, along with repairing our existing highway network, is crucial for the real estate industry and the markets we serve."

"Our transportation policy must solve our nation's energy and climate threats, not exacerbate them," said NRDC Federal Transportation Policy Director Deron Lovaas. "Transportation for America's roadmap will launch a visionary national infrastructure project for the first time in fifty years, creating jobs while also protecting the environment."

Functional, safe, and efficient transportation is one of the cornerstones upon which this country was built. America's economic strength and the health of its people depend on our ability to connect people with opportunity and the ability to move products to market quickly, safely, and efficiently.

A change in direction is needed to help the nation meet its growing demand for transportation while addressing challenges of energy security, global warming, shifting demographics, healthcare costs, and global economic competition. As Congress works on the new national transportation program, Transportation for America urges policymakers to commit to:

1. Responsible investing that holds recipients of federal funds accountable for progress toward national objectives.
2. A new strategy for creating a 21st Century transportation system that enhances economic opportunity for all, creates jobs, and elevates our position in a competitive global economy.
3. A program that improves essential connections within and between metropolitan areas while reducing dependence on petroleum and meeting national objectives for curbing climate change.
4. A more strategic approach to managing land use and transportation to improve efficiency, access, health, and safety, while reducing per capita vehicular travel.
5. A serious and concerted effort to address the impacts that transportation systems have on the health and safety of Americans.

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ABOUT TRANSPORTATION FOR AMERICA

Transportation for America (T4) is a broad coalition of housing, environmental, equity, public health, urban planning, transportation and other organizations focused on creating a 21st Century national transportation program. T4's goal is to build a modernized infrastructure and healthy communities where people can live, work and play by aligning national, state, and local transportation policies with an array of issues like economic opportunity, climate change, energy security, health, housing and community development. www.t4america.org