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For More Information:
202/289-4434 (ARTBA)
703/548-3118 (AGC)

May 6, 2015

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

"[I]t does give Congress and the tax-writing Committees ample time to consider a more long-term solution to the Highway Trust Fund,"—then House Ways & Means Committee Chairman Dave Camp (July 8, 2014)

Dear Speaker Boehner, Leader McConnell, Representative Pelosi and Senator Reid:

Chairman Camp's comments last year came as Congress was enacting the latest in a long line of temporary extensions of the highway and transit program. Those exact sentiments are now again being echoed by current members of Congress as the expiration of the 2014 measure looms at the end of this month.

The simple fact is Congress has had nearly 10 months and all the necessary information to finalize "a long-term solution to the Highway Trust Fund" and yet we are right back to the same scenario, with the same rhetoric, and, potentially, the same "solution" as took place last July.

The surface transportation programs have endured more than 30 extensions since 2009. The Highway Trust Fund has suffered five cash flow crises requiring \$65 billion in temporary cash infusions since 2008. This long-term cycle of uncertainty and piecemeal management undermines the ability of state transportation departments to implement multi-year transportation plans and discourages the private sector from making investments in new capital and personnel.

As such, we want to clarify that the duration of the next extension will have little impact on the 2015 construction season. When Congress chose last summer to again temporarily patch the Highway Trust Fund and extend the authorization of the programs for eight months, it guaranteed a disruption of this construction season. It has already occurred. States, on average, rely on federal highway funds to support more than 50 percent of their highway and bridge capital improvements and award contracts well in advance of the start of any project. Due to uncertainty about future federal funds, states have already delayed more than \$1 billion in planned transportation projects that would have been part of this construction season.

It is time to end the dubious claims that tax reform and another extension provide a clear path toward a long-term Highway Trust Fund solution. The next surface transportation extension should be of limited duration and include an explicit timeline detailing when the tax committees and the full Congress will act to generate the revenues needed to stabilize and grow highway and transit investment. That way we can "save" construction seasons for the next 10 years.

Sincerely,

The Transportation Construction Coalition