

Robyn Boerstling

*Director, Transportation & Infrastructure Policy
Infrastructure, Legal and Regulatory Policy*

June 18, 2015

The Honorable Orrin G. Hatch
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hatch and Ranking Member Wyden:

The National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) believes increased funding for the nation's transportation infrastructure is a critical priority which will help keep manufacturing competitive and grow the nation's economy. Manufacturers appreciate your commitment and interest in securing the financial health of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), the main funding mechanism for the nation's highway and transit systems.

While competitor nations continue to ramp up investments in transportation infrastructure, the United States risks a continued slide in the opposite direction. The level of real capital investment in highways and roads declined 20 percent from 2003 to 2012.

A long-term approach to funding infrastructure is needed to avoid uncertainty and ensure states have the ability to undertake multi-year and complex transportation investments such as new bridge replacements, improved interchanges, transit upgrades and additional capacity to relieve congestion that chokes our roads. Because many states do not have the resources or ability to keep up with the demands of aging or deteriorating infrastructure, the federal and state partnership is critical to maintain. No state in our Union would be better off on its own.

Transportation funding is a productive investment but manufacturers urge caution when considering tax proposals that promise to provide the resources for transportation investments over the next several years. For example, stand-alone proposals to tax overseas earnings outside of comprehensive tax reform represent a massive retroactive tax on manufacturers and would impose an additional cost burden on U.S. companies at a time when they already face significant challenges in the global marketplace.

The federal government has a fundamental role to play in investing in the nation's highways and transit systems to serve passenger travel, interstate commerce and national defense. Unlike most other government programs, the HTF was designed to be funded by federal fuel taxes and truck excise fees paid by those who use and benefit from access to our transportation networks. We encourage the Senate to recognize the importance of user fees in developing a solution to the current HTF funding crisis in addition to the other potential funding mechanisms, but also begin to develop future pathways that will lead to new approaches that will ensure appropriate funding levels in the years to come.

Leading Innovation. Creating Opportunity. Pursuing Progress.

Manufacturers welcome the Administration, the House and Senate working together to take decisive action on a multi-year funding solution for the HTF. We look forward to working with you and appreciate your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robyn M. Goewelt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R".