



U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Don Young
Chairman

Washington, DC 20515

January 10, 2005

James L. Oberstar
Ranking Democratic Member

Lloyd A. Jones, Chief of Staff
Elizabeth Megginson, Chief Counsel

David Heymsfeld, Democratic Chief of Staff

TEA 21 REAUTHORIZATION:
Member Requests for Highway and Transit Projects

Dear Colleague:

The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA 21) ushered in a new compact between motorists, and the user fees they pay into the Highway Trust Fund, and the Federal government's investment in our Nation's highway and transit infrastructure. TEA 21 established funding guarantees and budgetary firewalls that protect these user fees from being spent on unrelated government programs and ensured those dollars are invested back into the Nation's surface transportation infrastructure. This investment moves people and freight more safely and efficiently, reduces traffic congestion, improves the environment, and increases economic productivity.

TEA 21 authorized funds for our Nation's highway, transit, motor carrier, safety, and research programs. The TEA 21 Extension Act expires on May 31, 2005. As the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure prepares legislation to reauthorize these programs, we will identify specific projects that are of significant importance to the improvement of our Nation's surface transportation infrastructure. We believe that you, as Members of the House of Representatives, are in the best position to help us identify the particular surface transportation needs of your Congressional District and to propose solutions to address those needs.

This is a new call for transportation project requests and any information that was submitted in the 108th Congress must be resubmitted pursuant to the process outlined in this Dear Colleague. If you are interested in having the Committee consider specific surface transportation projects that would improve surface transportation in your District, please notify the Committee by following the instructions below.

1. Complete the attached questionnaire identifying your specific surface transportation needs. The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has created a website, <http://ushrtrans.house.gov>, to enable you to submit your requests electronically. The website will be available beginning on or about January 14. Due to limited space on the website, answers to each question are limited to 140 characters. You must answer all the questions or the computer program will not accept your form.
2. Should you want to include a more lengthy response to a particular question(s), please elaborate in the hard copy that is to be submitted, as referenced below.
3. In addition to the electronic copy, please complete a hard copy of the questionnaire. Again, please respond to all the questions on the form. The hard copy can either be a printed-out version of the online form or a more detailed and comprehensive reply to the questionnaire.
4. The Committee requires a signed letter, on official letterhead, from the primary Member requesting the project. Each project must have a single primary sponsoring Member. A Member requesting numerous projects can write one letter requesting various projects. This letter should be attached to the hard copy of the completed questionnaire.
5. Project requests with more than one supporting Member must submit a letter signed by all Members who support the project on the primary sponsoring Member's letterhead.
6. Completed questionnaires and any supporting materials should be submitted to either the Majority or Democratic office of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, depending on the party of the primary Member requesting the project. Accordingly, please send the questionnaire and any additional materials to the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, Majority office (B-370A Rayburn House Office Building) or Democratic office (B-375 Rayburn House Office Building), as appropriate.
7. To be considered by the Committee, each project request must include a completed electronic copy and hard copy.
8. All project requests must be submitted by close of business February 7, 2005.
9. Please check and re-check to make sure you have answered all the questions. If you have any questions regarding the questionnaire or this process, please call the Subcommittee staff (Majority staff at ext. 56715 or Democratic staff at ext. 59989) or us.

With your thoughtful assistance in this process, we can ensure that the Committee includes specific projects of significant importance to our national transportation system and that our Nation's urgent surface transportation needs are met.


DON YOUNG

Sincerely,


JAMES L. OBERSTAR

**TRANSPORTATION PROJECT EVALUATION CRITERIA,
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT**

REMEMBER TO MAKE SURE YOU HAVE FILLED OUT THE ENTIRE QUESTIONNAIRE.

1. Name and Congressional District of the primary Member of Congress sponsoring the project.
2. Other Members supporting the project.
3. If the project is a highway project, identify the State or other qualified recipient responsible for carrying out the project.
4. If the project is a transit project, please identify the project sponsor (must be an eligible recipient of Federal transit funds).
5. Please categorize the project. (Check one)
Highway or bridge _____ Intermodal facility (passenger) _____
Transit rail new start _____ Intermodal facility (freight) _____
Bus, bus equipment, or bus facility _____ Bicycle and Pedestrian _____
Other (please identify) _____
6. Is the project eligible for the use of Federal-aid highway or transit funds under Title 23 or Title 49 of the United States Code?
7. If the project is a highway or bridge project, is it on the National Highway System?
8. Briefly describe the total project.
 - a. Is it part of a larger system of projects and if so describe the larger system?
 - b. What is the total estimated cost of the project?
9. Please identify the specific segment for which project funding is being sought, including terminus points.
10. What dollar amount are you requesting in the authorization for this project or segment of a project?
11. Project Schedule
 - a. What is the proposed schedule and status of work on the project?
 - b. What is the current stage of development of the project? (If the project is a transit new start, please specify whether the project is in alternative analysis, preliminary engineering, final design, has been issued a record of decision, under environmental review, or already has a current full funding grant agreement.)
 - c. Will the requested funding for the project be obligated within the next five or six years?
12. Project Plan
 - a. Is the project part of the State's long-range plan?
 - b. Is the project included in the metropolitan and/or State Transportation Improvement Program(s)?
13. Is the project considered by the State and/or regional transportation officials as critical to their needs? Please provide a letter of support from these officials, and if you cannot, explain why not.
14. Does the project have national or regional significance? Describe.
15. Has the proposed project encountered, or is it likely to encounter, any significant opposition or other obstacles based on environmental or other types of concerns? If yes, please describe.
16. Describe the economic, environmental, congestion mitigation, and safety benefits associated with completion of the project.
17. Has the project already received funding through the State's federal-aid highway or transit formula apportionments or from other Federal, State, local, or private funds? If yes, how much and from what source?
18. Has the project received funding in a previous authorization act?
19. If the project has received funding in a previous authorization act, please cite the act(s) and amount(s) authorized.
20. Has the project received funding in a previous appropriations act?
21. If the project has received funding in a previous appropriations act, please cite the act(s) and amount(s) appropriated.
22. If the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure chose to fund this project, please provide a description of the project as you would like it to appear in the bill.