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July 8, 2008

The Honorable Charles Rangel
Chairman, House Ways and Means
Committee
1102 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable James Oberstar
Chairman, House Transportation and
Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rangel and Chairman Oberstar:

Thank you for your efforts to date to address the pending shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund (HTF). I share your disappointment that a short-term fix to this critical issue was recently blocked from reaching the floor by some of our colleagues, and hope that your committees can find a vehicle to move this important measure forward in the coming weeks.

As you well know, revenue into the HTF have dropped due to rising energy prices and our economic slowdown, leaving an alarming shortfall in the resources available for federal-aid highway programs that our states rely on. Both the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimate that the HTF will face a deficit of between \$1.4 billion and \$3.3 billion and fall far short of the levels authorized in SAFEETA-LU (PL 109-59) for fiscal year 2009. Such a shortfall would prevent the Fund from meeting its anticipated obligations and possibly prevent some transportation projects from being funded.

This is an especially critical issue for my district and the State of Connecticut. Over the past several weeks, I have heard from individuals across the board – state officials, local municipal leaders and those who work in, and depend on, the transportation industry – who are deeply concerned about the impact that the shortfall, if allowed to stand, would have on transportation investment in Connecticut. Some estimates indicate that Connecticut's cut could be as much as \$160.5 million, reducing the State's expected federal highway funds from \$482.8 million to approximately \$322.2 million in 2009.

Please know that I strongly support your efforts to address the HTF shortfall. I look forward to continuing to work with you not only to address this important short-term issue, but in strengthening the long term investment in our nation's transportation infrastructure.

Sincerely,

JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress