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August 29, 2011

Dear Members of the California Congressional Delegation:

As the Acting Director for the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) I would like to take the opportunity to express my appreciation to you for your representation of the State of California and for the work you are doing to sustain federal transportation investments. Our national and state economies depend heavily upon an efficient, well maintained transportation system to carry the goods, people and services that, in turn, drive America's economy. I would like to highlight an issue of critical importance to ensure the State's ability to keep transportation improvement projects moving forward, creating jobs, improving mobility and the quality of life for Californians.

The end of the federal fiscal year is rapidly approaching, and with it, the expiration of federal transportation authorization and funding for all current and future transportation projects. The potential impact of the federal transportation program and revenue stream being allowed to expire without extension or replacement is enormous.

Thousands of active state and local projects valued at $23 billion would grind to a halt within weeks as California's primary state transportation account would be drained to pay $8 billion in unliquidated obligations. The negative economic impact due to lost jobs and disrupted commerce would be significant. Even a minor delay in approving a program extension or replacement would mean a permanent loss of funds and result in significant disruption to ongoing projects. I urge you to maintain the continuity of funding and keep the Highway Trust Fund solvent.

California leads the nation in developing and implementing innovative strategies to preserve and improve the transportation system. To continue, we must maintain current levels of federal transportation infrastructure investments. A continuing resolution will keep transportation funding in place, but the needs of our customers, the traveling public, do require certainty.

To achieve our shared goals, I encourage you to consider swift passage of legislation to reauthorize transportation funding programs. Working together, we can protect and improve our transportation infrastructure in a way that does not increase the national deficit, while creating jobs and strengthening the economy.

Sincerely,

MALCOLM DOUGHERTY
Acting Director
California Department of Transportation

c: The Honorable Barbara Boxer, Chairman
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
The Honorable James M. Inhofe, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
The Honorable John L. Mica, Chairman
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, Ranking Member
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee