

February 2, 2004

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby  
Chairman  
Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs  
United States Senate  
534 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

As you prepare to mark up the Federal Public Transportation Act of 2004, the Coalition of Northeastern Governors (CONEG) would like to share with you our strong interest in the transit provisions that will become a vital component of the nation's surface transportation programs. Specifically, we strongly urge you to authorize a level of funding that will provide adequate growth for the fixed-guideway modernization program. We also appreciate your strong efforts to protect the mass transit account in the highway trust fund, grow the bus and bus facilities grant program, and continue support for rural, elderly and disabled transit programs.

The fixed guideway modernization program is particularly important to the oldest and most heavily used transit systems across the nation. Most of these systems were initially built by the States before a federal transit program existed. These systems, which are essential to the mobility of these communities, now require significant funding for maintenance and modernization. As needs grow and more transit systems become eligible for this program, slow or no growth in this critical program will only delay needed maintenance and prevent these transit systems from meeting the growing demand for their services.

Again, we thank you for your leadership to strengthen the nation's transit systems, and strongly urge you to provide adequate funding to grow the fixed-guideway modernization program.

Sincerely,

\o.s.\  
Mitt Romney  
Chair  
Governor of Massachusetts

\o.s.\  
John Baldacci  
Vice Chair  
Governor of Maine