May 28, 2014

Honorable Senator Elizabeth Warren
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Edward J. Markey
218 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Congressman William R. Keating
315 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Congressman Joseph P. Kennedy III
1218 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Highway Trust Fund and MAP 21 Reauthorization

Dear Honorable Senators and Representatives:

The 27 communities served by the Southeastern Regional Planning and Economic Development District (SRPEDD) depend on robust and reliable transportation infrastructure. SRPEDD is very concerned that the Federal government is facing a deficit in the Highway Trust Fund, and that we do not have long term transportation legislation in place as a successor to MAP-21.

Commerce, employment, education and opportunity are at risk if Congress and the Administration do not rescue the trust fund from deficit, and enact legislation that regional leaders can depend on for planning and growth. On behalf of these leaders and the region we serve, the SRPEDD Commission voted to support this letter of concern at its April 23, 2014 meeting.

Transportation investment, including in roads, rails and transit, is key to our long-term economic competitiveness. Not only do we compete with other regions in the United States, but with countries that are wisely investing in mobility.

Our region and our nation’s ability to build and maintain our transportation network is nearing a crisis because the federal Highway Trust Fund is headed for insolvency. Without your support for increased revenue, our trust fund will be in a deep deficit that could require halting the federal program as early as this summer. That would be disastrous for our region’s future, and for the Commonwealth and the nation.

From the perspective of SRPEDD, transportation investments are essential to resolving bottlenecks, ensuring efficient and timely freight delivery, getting workers and students safely to jobs and school, and providing residents with a high quality of life, which is critical to attracting and retaining a talented workforce. We are very grateful for the commitments.
that have been made to invest in transportation, but without assurances of funding, those commitments cannot be met.

Just as critical as formula programs the region are competitive and discretionary programs like New Starts, TIGER, passenger rail and TIFIA that promote innovation on the ground.

There is much work to be done in transportation. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has stepped up and raised additional transportation revenue after a long and difficult process, and substantially more needs to be done statewide and locally to stay on track. However, without federal funding we will not be able to meet the twin demands of maintaining our current transportation system and preparing for a competitive future. For these reasons we support Transportation for America’s proposal to raise $30 billion to shore up the trust fund and to support other key surface transportation programs that spur innovation and promote local control.

As Congress considers reauthorization of MAP-21 over the next year, we look forward to working with you to address the funding gap the program currently faces and to give local communities the tools to implement innovative solutions to their transportation challenges.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Henry, Chair

Stephen Smith, Executive Director