



Public Affairs

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Statement to President-elect Obama's Transportation Transition Team:

AAA seeks to be a partner in your effort to provide a seamless transition for President-elect Obama's Administration. The policy study and operations review will be extremely important in ensuring the new USDOT leadership hits the ground running. This is a crucial time. The nation is at a crossroads, where there is a vital need for significant investment in transportation infrastructure.

In the near term, transportation investments will provide an economic boost to the nation's economy and we support your efforts to include funding for transportation in the stimulus package early next year. The benefits of these investments are lasting and necessary to maintain Americans' safety, quality of life, and our national competitiveness in an increasingly complex global economy.

AAA has been active in communicating with our 51 million members and the general public on the importance of transportation investments and the need for federal program reforms. Our research suggests that the public has little understanding of the magnitude of the challenges we face, and they lack trust in how their money is currently spent. There is no doubt the so-called "bridge to nowhere" contributed to the negative view the public holds, and it has overshadowed many positive aspects of the existing program. This negative public perception constitutes a major hurdle in effecting good policy that serves the nation.

To reestablish trust with the motoring public, we believe a clear vision, redefined federal priorities and increased accountability are required. Earmark reform must also be on the table, and leadership in USDOT will be needed to ensure earmarks meet established criteria, have priority in regional, state and local transportation plans, and adhere to a transparent process. AAA believes further program reforms should include:

- Development of detailed metrics and a move to a performance-based system for all programs;
- Better links between funding allocations and performance goals;
- The ability to track project/program outcomes to goals;
- Better data collection to ensure effectiveness.

In order for the public to rally behind the kind of investments that are likely going to be needed, we must start by acknowledging their frustration with the current approach, and clearly demonstrate a commitment to changes that deliver a direct improvement to their daily lives.

When it comes to future funding options, AAA will be guided by our "Motorists' Bill of Rights" (see enclosed). All funding options must be on the table and be thoroughly debated, including fuel taxes, tolling, public private partnerships, and all other funding sources. But the public interest is paramount.

We look forward to working with the new Administration to make America stronger through investment in transportation solutions that enhance our competitiveness, improve safety, reduce congestion and provide mobility options for all Americans.

Robert L. Darbelnet, President & CEO

Enclosure



Transportation: Making the Case for Motorists



BILL OF RIGHTS FOR THE NATION'S MOTORISTS ON TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

- 1** The United States requires a new vision for transportation that addresses 21st century needs, ensures broad access and adequate funding, and equitably allocates benefits and payments among users.
- 2** A new transportation vision must ensure that the system significantly enhances safety, mobility, and reliability to provide an appropriate return on investment to motorists who will continue to pay most of the costs.
- 3** Transportation improvements should be based upon needs that are clearly identified, and outcomes that are supported by research and assured through application of performance standards.
- 4** Transportation taxes, fees and other revenue collected from motorists must be equitable and transparent. Transportation agencies must demonstrate to the public that transportation resources are managed wisely and efficiently.
- 5** Motorists must receive direct and recognizable improvements to their travel experience if they are asked to pay more.
- 6** Revenues generated from taxes, fees, and other pricing mechanisms paid by motorists must be dedicated solely to meeting identified transportation needs and protected from diversion to other uses.
- 7** Funding alternatives to supplement or eventually replace motor vehicle fuel taxes must be carefully evaluated as to their ability to be efficiently implemented, accepted by the public, allocated fairly, fully dedicated to transportation needs, and be resistant to fraud and evasion.
- 8** Public-private partnerships to increase transportation investments must be carefully managed to ensure that motorist fees are fair and equitable, that motorist fees are not diverted to non-transportation purposes, and that the facility is consistently maintained and improved.
- 9** Publicly owned transportation facilities should only be sold or leased to private interests if agreements require the maintenance of high levels of service and remain under public oversight. Revenues resulting from the sale or lease must be used only for transportation purposes and compensate the public for the value of the facility.
- 10** Transportation fees, taxes, and other revenue collected from motorists should fairly represent their use of the system, and all transportation system users should bear a proportionate share of financing the system.

The American transportation system is among the most advanced in the world. Americans value their ability to travel where they want, when they want, and how they want as a quality of life issue. Because motorists pay a large share of our transportation bill, AAA, with almost 50 million members in the United States and Canada, is working to ensure that their voice is heard as decisions are made about the future of transportation.

**Additional information is available at:
www.AAA.com/publicaffairs**