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April 5, 2011

The Honorable John L. Mica
Chairman
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall, II
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John J. Duncan, Jr.
Chairman
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit
B-376 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit
B-375 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Mica, Ranking Member Rahall, Chairman Duncan and Ranking Member DeFazio:

I appreciated the opportunity to testify today on the need for the Committee to repeal the toll credit language from the 2005 SAFETEA-LU.

As you know, the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 allowed states to use toll credits to finance the non-federal portion of transportation projects. However, the 2005 SAFETEA-LU Act included language that modified the requirements, and toll credits were no longer able to be used to fund the non-federal portion of Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS). This decision halted numerous highway construction projects throughout Appalachia, and continues to hurt underserved areas in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Repealing the toll credit language from SAFETEA-LU will help to jumpstart numerous transportation projects throughout the Appalachian region of our country, including the immediate construction of a four-lane limited access highway linking Somerset and Meyersdale, Pennsylvania.

By helping to fuel road construction, the repeal of the current toll credit language will stimulate the economy by creating jobs and economic development. For example, completing US 219 between Somerset and I-68 will have an immediate economic impact and lead to the creation of between 2400-2600 permanent jobs and 8,000 construction and construction-related jobs. It will

also help to improve commerce by connecting existing trade corridors, including I-68, the Pennsylvania Turnpike, and US-22.

I strongly encourage you to include language in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization bill that will repeal the language from SAFETEA-LU that prevents toll credits from being used to fund the non-federal portion of projects on the Appalachian Development Highway System. This is a policy that will have a positive impact on many states, and will help to create jobs and economic development during this period of slow economic growth.

Again, I appreciated the opportunity to testify, and I look forward to working with you and the Committee on this important issue in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of the letters 'M', 'S', and 'A' in a stylized, cursive font. A long horizontal line extends from the top of the 'A' across the page.

MARK S. CRITZ
MEMBER OF CONGRESS