



March x, 2009

We are writing to support the Clean Low-Emission Affordable New Transportation Efficiency Act (CLEAN-TEA) and to urge you to cosponsor this important, forward-thinking legislation. Transportation for America is a new, diverse coalition of more than 225 organizations throughout the country dedicated to bringing our transportation policy into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and we believe that CLEAN-TEA is an important step towards a more sustainable transportation future. This legislation will help not only ensure greater investment in low carbon transportation options, but will additionally help put us on the path to energy independence, reduce transportation costs for Americans, and create jobs to build out clean, green transportation infrastructure.

Reducing oil consumption and emissions in the transportation sector are integral to climate and energy policy. Transportation is responsible for a third of America's carbon dioxide emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>), making it the nation's largest and fastest growing source, and this sector consumes more than 70 percent of our country's oil. We will not be able to meet these challenges without finding ways to help American accomplish more in their daily lives while driving fewer miles.

Too few Americans live in communities that are equipped with convenient and reliable access to public transportation or walking and bicycling facilities. This situation persists despite unprecedented demand for more walkable communities with better transportation choices. Fewer than 5 percent of Americans live within walking distance of a transit stop; however, of those who do, only 33 percent regularly use public transportation. Lacking more affordable options, families are being squeezed by transportation costs, which are now the second largest average expense after housing, consuming 18 percent of household income on average.

CLEAN-TEA would not only boost investment in transit, rail, and pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, but also would create an incentive for regions and states to develop long-term plans to reduce greenhouse gases for the transportation sector. Such plans, already in use regions such as Sacramento, CA and Salt Lake City, UT, are integral to getting the largest, most cost-effective, and sustainable greenhouse gas reductions possible.

For example, in Sacramento, the Metropolitan Planning Organization conducted a blueprint planning process that compared a business-as-usual 2035 plan to one that

prioritized investments in public transportation and more compact, walkable development. The second plan, which became this six-county region's preferred 2035 transportation plan, made the following strides:

- Reduced vehicle miles traveled by 26 percent,
- Reduced average daily driving time by 20 minutes (from 81 minutes down to 61)
- Reduced vehicle emissions per capita by 15 percent.

With the imminent authorization of our federal transportation policy, we believe that energy and climate concerns must be an important part of this legislation. However, including the transportation sector in federal climate change legislation is just as vital, as it will help ensure our climate and transportation policies operate on parallel instead of conflicting paths.

We hope you can support this important legislation and we look forward to working with you with to build a more sustainable, energy-efficient transportation future for the U.S.

Sincerely,