



March 6, 2009

The Honorable Tom Carper
U.S. Senate
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Carper:

On behalf of the Safe Routes to School National Partnership, I write to thank you for introducing the “Clean, Low-Emission, Affordable, New transportation Efficiency Act.” We strongly support the bill’s goals to expand transportation options so that more Americans can walk, bicycle, or use public transit—saving greenhouse gas emissions.

Given that the transportation sector produced nearly one-third of all U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in 2006 and that greenhouse gas emissions from transportation are increasing more quickly than other sectors, it is critical that Congress support driving alternatives as part of any climate change effort. Currently, one-quarter of all trips by car are less than a mile in length, which is an easy distance for a pedestrian or cyclist.

Your legislation would dedicate ten percent of future cap and trade auction revenues to safe, convenient transportation alternatives. Creating safe infrastructure for walking and bicycling will allow more individuals to shift those shorter trips away from cars, and access public transit for longer trips. Researchers have found that a five percent increase in a neighborhood’s walkability leads to a six percent reduction in vehicle miles traveled—so adding sidewalks, bicycle paths, and crosswalks will have an impact on carbon emissions.

The Safe Routes to School National Partnership works in partnership with hundreds of organizations across the country to make it safer for children to walk and bicycle to school. By getting more children out of cars and into healthy, green habits, we are helping address our country’s climate change crisis. The EPA documented that neighborhood schools reduce traffic, produce a 13 percent increase in walking and bicycling, and a 15 percent reduction in emissions that contribute to poor air quality. We project that if we could return to the 1969 levels of walking and bicycling to school, we would save 3.2 billion vehicle miles traveled and 1.5 million tons of carbon dioxide—equal to twenty percent of the savings generated by the American public transit system.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. We look forward to working with you in the future to increase environmentally-friendly and safe transportation options for communities all throughout the United States. For more information on Safe Routes to School, please contact Margo Pedroso, Policy Manager, at margo@saferoutespartnership.org or 301-292-1043.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Deb Hubsmith".

Deb Hubsmith, Director
Safe Routes to School National Partnership