May 30, 2012

Dear Members of the Conference Committee on Surface Transportation Reauthorization:

As you move forward conferring on the transportation bill, the 70 undersigned national organizations respectfully urge you to maintain the Cardin-Cochran agreement from MAP-21 in the conference report.

Our organizations care about a diverse range of issues—transportation, safety, accessibility, economic competitiveness, historic preservation, health and obesity. And we are united in asking you to ensure that local governments have flexibility and funding certainty to address these issues by making available to them a small portion of federal transportation dollars.

MAP-21 directs a percentage of funds under the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program for “Additional Activities.” This program includes Transportation Enhancements with expanded eligibility for environmental mitigation, Safe Routes to School, and some road and other uses. These programs have traditionally been invested in a variety of smaller-scale, local transportation projects such as building sidewalks, bikeways and other improvements that make downtowns economically competitive and safe for families and pedestrians of all ages.

The Cardin-Cochran agreement is a bipartisan compromise that gives local governments a voice in transportation planning through sub-allocation and grant competitions. It gives local governments—those closest to the needs of their constituents and communities—an opportunity to weigh in on how states spend their Additional Activities federal
transportation dollars. The compromise does not change the underlying Additional Activities program or the new eligibilities.

Americans want more biking and walking projects in their communities—rural, suburban, and urban—to provide healthy and safe transportation choices, improve air quality, create jobs and stimulate economic competitiveness in their downtowns. A national poll conducted in March 2012 by the Princeton Survey Research Associates showed that 83 percent of all Americans, including 88 percent of Democrats and 80 percent of Republicans, support maintaining or increasing federal investments in biking and walking.

Maintaining local access to this small portion of the transportation bill by retaining the Cardin-Cochran agreement is critical to ensuring that cities and counties of all sizes have a voice in addressing the needs of their constituents. We appreciate your consideration and urge your support for the Cardin-Cochran agreement.

Sincerely,

21st Century School Fund
AARP
Action for Healthy Kids
Adventure Cycling Association
Alliance for Biking & Walking
America Bikes
America Walks
American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Council on Exercise
American Cultural Resources Association
American Diabetes Association
American Heart Association
American Public Health Association
American Society of Landscape Architects
Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals
Better World Club
Bikes Belong Coalition
Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund
ChangeLab Solutions (formerly Public Health Law & Policy)
Defeat Diabetes Foundation
Directors of Health Promotion and Education
Earth Day Network
HealthCorps
Hepatitis Foundation International
Institute for Transportation & Development Policy
International Mountain Bicycling Association
League of American Bicyclists
Local Government Commission
LOCUS: Responsible Real Estate Developers and Investors
NAACP
National Association for Sport and Physical Education
National Association of Chronic Disease Directors
National Association of City Transportation Officials
National Association of Counties
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Regional Councils
National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation Services
National Bicycle Dealers Association
National Center for Bicycling & Walking
National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity
National Complete Streets Coalition
National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers
National Education Association Health Information Network
National League of Cities
National PTA
National Recreation and Park Association
National Trust for Historic Preservation
National Wildlife Federation
NCLR (National Council of La Raza)
Outdoor Industry Association
Partnership for Prevention
PlayCore
PolicyLink
Preservation Action
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Reconnecting America
Safe Kids Worldwide
Safe Routes to School National Partnership
Safe States Alliance
Save the Children
Sierra Club
Smart Growth America
The U.S. Conference of Mayors
Transportation Equity Network/Gamaliel
Transportation for America
Trust for America's Health
U.S. Travel Association
Western States Tourism Policy Council
YMCA of the USA