

ANN McLANE KUSTER  
SECOND DISTRICT, NEW HAMPSHIRE

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## Congress of the United States House of Representatives

March 17, 2016

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The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and  
Urban Development  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Price  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and  
Urban Development  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Diaz-Balart and Ranking Member Price:

As you prepare the Transportation-HUD appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2017, we write to respectfully request a funding level for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)'s Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grant Program, commonly known as New Starts and Small Starts, which matches the President's budget request of \$3.5 billion.

New Starts and Small Starts grants fund the creation or extension of existing fixed guideway transit systems, including commuter rail, light rail, heavy rail, bus rapid transit, streetcars, and ferries. Grants to these systems have facilitated the creation of dozens of new or extended public transportation systems in rural, suburban, and urban communities across America. Selected projects support local economies by creating construction jobs and connecting job-seeking commuters with employers, as well as facilitating regional mobility and tourism.

New Starts projects, like all transportation investments in metropolitan areas, must emerge from a regional, multi-modal transportation planning process. Projects are evaluated for inclusion in the program based on cost effectiveness, mobility improvements, operating efficiencies, and environmental benefits, among other criteria.

Congress has played a significant role in structuring the New Starts program, requiring the FTA to rigorously evaluate and rate New Starts projects according to their projected capital costs, operating costs, and ability to commit local funds to finance at least 40 percent of the project's construction. In addition, the FTA is required to examine each project's cost effectiveness, mobility improvements, environmental benefits, land use, operating efficiencies, and economic development. Only those projects that achieve established rating thresholds can receive a full funding grant agreement under which Federal funding can be committed.

High demand for program funding means that eligible projects currently face delays in securing grants and receiving full grant amounts, and that new applicants will be forced to wait in the pipeline until FTA can meet its current commitments. Through increased funding of this important program, the FTA can support the construction of dozens of new transit projects that will create jobs, reduce congestion on our roads and support local economies across the country.

We therefore urge you to invest in our nation's transit systems in the FY 2017 T-HUD appropriations bill by providing robust funding for the New Starts and Small Starts Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grant Program. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress

Elijah Cummings  
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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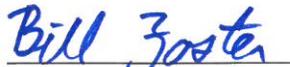
  
Frederica S. Wilson  
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Alan Grayson  
Member of Congress

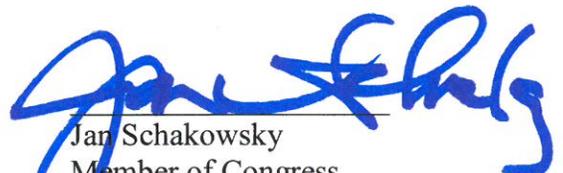
  
Lois Frankel  
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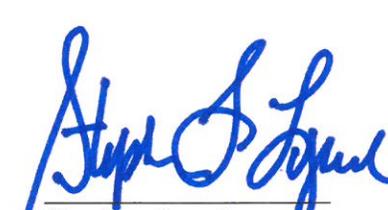
  
Corrine Brown  
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Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress

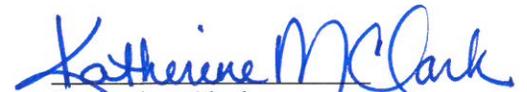
  
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Dan Lipinski  
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Jan Schakowsky  
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Stephen Lynch  
Member of Congress

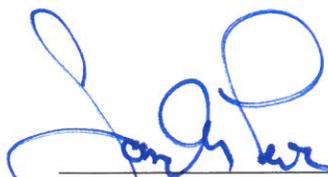
  
Bill Keating  
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Katherine Clark  
Member of Congress

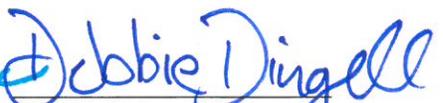
  
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Gerald Connolly  
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Mike Thompson

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Keith Ellison  
Member of Congress



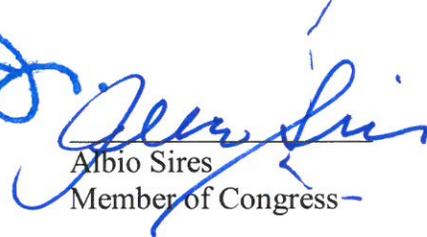
Alma Adams  
Member of Congress



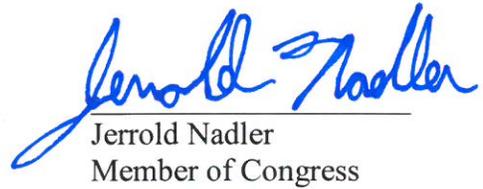
G. K. Butterfield  
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Donald M. Payne Jr.  
Member of Congress



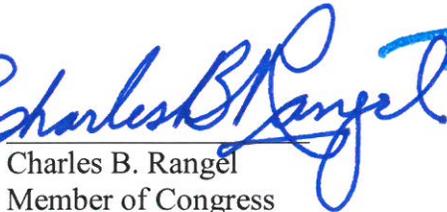
Albio Sires  
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Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



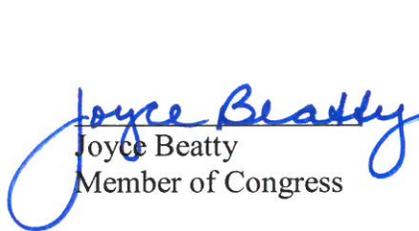
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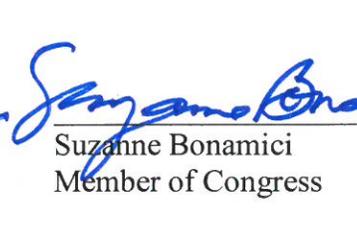
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Joyce Beatty  
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Suzanne Bonamici  
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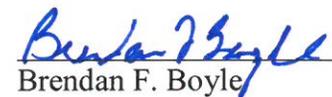
Earl Blumenauer  
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Peter DeFazio  
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Chaka Fattah  
Member of Congress



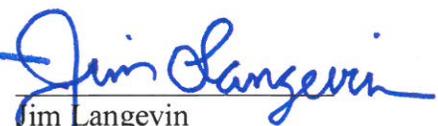
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Member of Congress

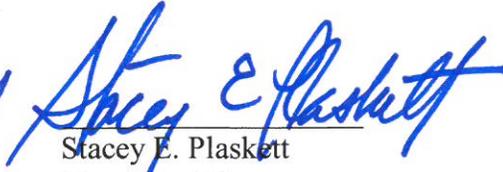


Jim Langevin  
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas

Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress



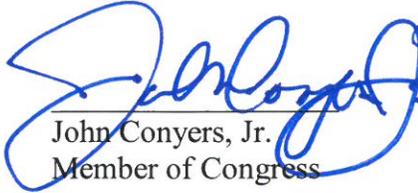
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Member of Congress



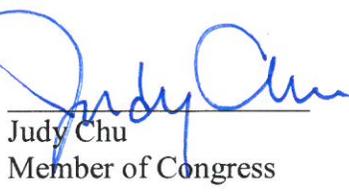
André Carson

André Carson  
Member of Congress



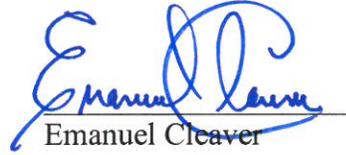
John Conyers, Jr.

John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Judy Chu

Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



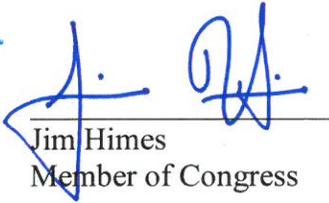
Emanuel Cleaver

Emanuel Cleaver  
Member of Congress



Dina Titus

Dina Titus  
Member of Congress



Jim Himes

Jim Himes  
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney

Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress



Jerry McNerney

Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress