

February 15, 2012

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader, United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader, United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell:

We are writing in strong support of the inclusion of a national freight transportation policy that takes into account our nation's intermodal network of highways, rail corridors, air freight and maritime pathways in the long-term reauthorization of federal surface transportation programs.

Maximizing our nation's freight mobility infrastructure is key to the United States' global competitiveness and private sector job growth. In an increasingly interconnected economy, the ability to move goods safely, reliably and quickly is essential not only for consumers to get their products but also for businesses to take advantage of global supply chains and deliver on their commitments. Unfortunately, freight bottlenecks and other forms of congestion already cost U.S. businesses about \$200 billion a year – both because of the increased price to ship goods as well as transportation costs for raw materials and other inputs.

A robust national freight policy will help our country identify and target investment across modes in highway, railroad, airport, seaport, and intermodal freight transportation projects that can create jobs, improve overall freight network performance, and promote stronger partnerships between freight-dependent businesses and government. In particular, an effective freight plan would:

- Establish a national freight strategic performance plan to assess the performance of our surface transportation system, identify a list of priority freight corridors and gateways, analyze long-term freight and transportation trends, and further the goals of the National Export Initiative;
- Generate new tools and data to evaluate freight-related projects to determine cost-benefit and other attributes to ensure wise investment of taxpayer dollars; and
- Create a national competitive freight infrastructure investment grant program to prioritize cost-beneficial freight projects and invest in our nationwide freight network, including highways, railroads, ports, and intermodal facilities.

The inclusion of a national freight policy in surface transportation legislation is essential to ensuring adequate capacity, reduced congestion and increased throughput at key choke points, and will pay significant dividends to our economy. We urge your support, and we look

forward to working with you to ensure that the United States has the infrastructure in place to maintain its leading position in the global economy.

Sincerely,



Phil Bussey
President & CEO
Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce



Eric Schinfeld
President
Washington Council on International Trade

On Behalf of the Following Organizations

Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce

Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, GA

Silicon Valley Leadership Group, CA

Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, DO

Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, CA

Portland Business Alliance, OR

Tacoma-Pierce County Chamber of Commerce,
WA

Economic Alliance Snohomish County, WA

Anderson Hay & Grain Company, WA

Pacific NW Waterways Association

National Retail Federation

American Apparel & Footwear Association

Coalition of New England Companies for Trade

Washington Council on International Trade

Port of Seattle, WA

Port of Tacoma, WA

Port of Vancouver, WA

Port of Portland, OR

Port of Oakland, CA

Pacific Merchant Shipping Association

American Association of Port Authorities

Coalition for Americas Gateways and Trade
Corridors

The National Industrial Transportation League

The Agriculture Transportation Coalition

Pacific Coast Council of Customs Brokers &
Freight Forwarders Associations