

Senators call for continued investment in public transportation

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WASHINGTON—U.S. Senators Dick Durbin (D-IL), Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), Patty Murray (D-WA), and Brian Schatz (D-HI) led a group of 33 senators calling on the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development to continue funding the Federal Transit Administration's Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program, which supports public transportation projects in communities across the United States.

In a letter to the subcommittee's chairwoman and ranking member, the senators expressed concern that CIG funding was notably absent from President Donald Trump's preliminary budget request for Fiscal Year 2018. With transit ridership in the United States at its highest level in five decades, the senators warned that failing to fund the grant program will result in greater traffic congestion, fewer jobs, and wasted economic potential and put nearly 60 projects in the current pipeline from 19 states at risk.

"The CIG program, through its New Starts, Small Starts, and Core Capacity grants, allows communities to compete for funding to build and improve subway, commuter rail, light rail, bus rapid transit, streetcar, and ferry projects that move people more efficiently, improve quality of life, and increase economic growth and sustainability," wrote the senators. "We were disappointed to see the elimination of future funding for this vital program in the Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Blueprint, contradicting Congress' recent bipartisan commitment to the CIG program in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, which authorized \$2.3 billion annually for CIG grants through Fiscal Year 2020."

The letter was also signed by Senators Bill Nelson (D-FL), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Bob Menendez (D-NJ), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Ed Markey (D-MA), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Debbie Stabenow (D-MI), Joe Donnelly (D-IN), Al Franken (D-MN), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Chris Coons (D-DE), Sherrod Brown (D-OH), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Gary Peters (D-MI), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Ben Cardin (D-MD), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), Kamala Harris (D-CA), Bob Casey (D-PA), Tom Carper (D-DE), and Mark Warner (D-VA).