

February 18, 2022

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Schumer and Leader McConnell:

As the leading road safety associations and organizations in the United States, we write to strongly urge you to oppose the Gas Prices Relief Act, introduced by Sens. Kelly, Hassan, Stabenow, Cortez Masto, Warnock and Rosen. This legislation would be calamitous to federal transportation and road safety programs, shortly after the enactment of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) that provided historic federal investments in this nation's infrastructure.

The IIJA nearly doubled funding for road safety programs, clearly demonstrating the intent of Congress to address the vast safety needs on our transportation network. The IIJA focuses on roadway safety infrastructure, work zone and commercial vehicle safety, behavioral and educational safety programs, enforcement campaigns, and the safety of vulnerable road users. These investments are critical to improve safety on our roadways, but the Gas Prices Relief Act imperils implementation of these important programs by threatening the funding provided in the IIJA.

According to preliminary estimates from the National Safety Council for the first half of 2021, traffic fatalities rose 16 percent from the previous year to 21,450. In 2020, the last full year of data that is available, more than 42,000 men, women and children died on U.S. roadways. It is inconceivable to think that just when Congress is aggressively tackling this nationwide trend, the legs will be cut out from underneath this critically important effort.

The ability to come together and enact multi-year transportation bills rests on the user-fee funded Highway Trust Fund (HTF), which allows for contract authority to be provided to states to meet their transportation system needs. Without the user fees generated from federal fuel taxes, the funding necessary to pay for the IIJA investments will not be available unless Congress again transfers funds from the General Fund into the HTF. At a time of record federal debt and deficits, it makes little sense to suspend a revenue source needed to maintain the solvency of the HTF.

Although perhaps well intentioned, we know that any reduction in fuel prices that this legislation aims to achieve will not be fully realized by taxpayers, even in the short term. In addition, it will be incredibly difficult to reinstate this user fee once this proposed suspension sunsets at the end of 2022. This legislation is bad policy for taxpayers and for the safety of all road users. Please oppose the Gas Prices

Relief Act and protect Congress's ability to implement the IIJA and future long-term, safety-focused transportation bills.

Sincerely,

American Traffic Safety Services Association

AAA

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials

American Highway Users Alliance

American Public Works Association

American Society of Civil Engineers

Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance

FIA Foundation

Governors Highway Safety Association

Institute of Transportation Engineers

National Association of County Engineers

National Asphalt Pavement Association

Cc: Sen. Richard Durbin
Sen. John Thune
Sen. Mark Kelly
Sen. Maggie Hassan
Sen. Debbie Stabenow
Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto
Sen. Raphael Warnock
Sen. Jackie Rosen