



NATIONAL CONFERENCE *of* STATE LEGISLATURES

*The Forum for America's Ideas*

June 26, 2008

Mr. Robert Atkinson  
President, Information Technology and Innovation Foundation  
Chair, National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission  
c/o Jack Wells, Chief Economist  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20590

**Donna D. Stone**  
*State Representative  
Delaware  
President, NCSL*

**Sharon A. Crouch Steidel**  
*Director, Information Systems  
Virginia House of Delegates  
Staff Chair, NCSL*

**William T. Pound**  
*Executive Director*

Dear Chairman Atkinson:

Thank you for your letter of May 22, 2008 inviting comment on the "Candidate List of Potential Funding Mechanisms," and associated evaluation criteria, that you and your fellow commissioners are considering for recommendation to Congress when they take up the next surface transportation authorization bill. I write on behalf of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and the state legislators who are custodians of the nation's surface transportation system, charged with assuring the necessary funds, plans, and processes for its maintenance, operation, and expansion. I regret that I was not able to meet your invitation's June 2<sup>nd</sup> deadline, but I hope that our brief comments will be useful to the Commission.

The Commission's candidate list of funding streams is quite extensive, but I found it to be largely a list of methods already employed by states and localities. As the Commission considers possible mechanisms for bolstering federal transportation funding, I encourage you to vigorously apply your final evaluation criterion regarding the applicability to the level of government. I urge you to avoid any recommendations to Congress that would suggest the federalization of a funding stream already utilized at the state or local level and to not encourage federal intrusion into state and local tax bases, which will only serve to shrink the resources available for transportation. I am confident that the Commission can identify new, creative federal revenue streams that will complement and not interfere with state and local financing mechanisms.

NCSL, in partnership with the National Academy of Public Administration and our sister organizations representing state and local elected officials, participated in an Intergovernmental Forum on Transportation Finance. A major focus of this study and final report was to examine the different roles that the various levels of government play in funding American transportation infrastructure. I recommend this report, and in particular the first chapter, to you and all of the commissioners. You can find the report on-line at <http://www.ncsl.org/print/standcomm/sctran/NAPAreport0108.pdf>; I would also be happy to provide you a copy of the printed report.

An important federal-state-local partnership supports America's transportation system. NCSL looks forward to further engagement with your Commission as you continue your work and to your recommendations to Congress. We also look forward to working with Congress to ensure that this

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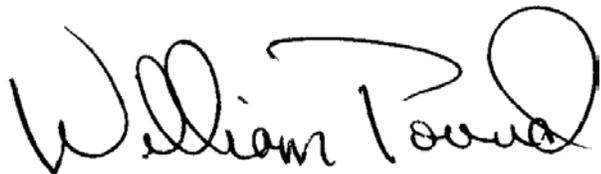
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partnership continues and is strengthened in the next authorization so that America's transportation needs are met.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William T. Pound". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent loop at the end of the word "Pound".

William T. Pound  
Executive Director