

U.S. Chamber of Commerce • American Public Transportation Association • U.S. Conference of Mayors • National League of Cities • Employers Council on Flexible Compensation • Amalgamated Transit Union • Association for Commuter Transportation • Chicago Transit Authority • The Commuter Benefits Work for Us Coalition • The Community Transportation Association of America • Edenred USA • GVF • Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority • Metropolitan Transportation Commission – San Francisco Bay Area • METRA (IL) • New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority • Pace Suburban Bus Services (IL) • Parsons Brinckerhoff • Regional Transportation Authority (IL) • Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County • San Francisco Metropolitan Transportation Authority • San Mateo County Transit District • Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority • Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority • Smart Growth America • TransitCenter, Inc. • Transportation for America • Utah Transit Authority • VPSI • WageWorks • Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

February 3, 2012

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner,

We the undersigned organizations urge you to take immediate action to restore parity between the transit portion and the parking portion of the federal pre-tax commuter benefit. Failure to address this issue at the end of 2011 led to an almost 50 percent reduction in the transit commuter benefit on January 1 to \$125 per month from its previous level of \$230 per month. Meanwhile, the parking benefit increased from \$230 per month to \$240 per month due to a cost of living increase.

The decrease in the transit portion of the commuter benefit results in an increased tax burden for workers who rely on public transportation for their daily commutes. For example, a working family that took advantage of the full allowable monthly pre-tax deduction for transit in 2011 will pay as much as \$500 more this year in federal taxes. This is a significant cost increase that many commuters simply cannot afford in this economy. In addition, this added cost increase, combined with rising fuel costs and transit fares, will make it difficult for workers that are fortunate to have jobs to be able to continue to afford their commute to work. The reduction in the monthly transit limit will also result in an increase in payroll taxes for many businesses that offer the benefit – important resources that could be reinvested in the economy to create new jobs.

The current disparity between the parking and transit portions of the commuter benefit amounts to a policy that encourages commuters to drive to work, rather than use public transportation. This will result in increased traffic congestion on our roads, a rise in our nation's reliance on foreign fuel imports, and a rise in greenhouse gas emissions that harm our environment.

In the coming days, Congress will have the opportunity to take action to restore parity in the parking and transit portions of the commuter benefit as it considers important tax and transportation related legislation. As you work to address many of the important issues that face our nation, we urge you to not to forget the more than 2.7 million commuting Americans that rely on the transit commuter benefit and work to pass legislation that will ensure that transit riders can continue to afford their commute to work.

Sincerely,

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The Community Transportation Association of America
Edenred USA
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GVF
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority
METRA (IL)
Metropolitan Transportation Commission – San Francisco Bay Area
National League of Cities
New York Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Parsons Brinckerhoff
Regional Transportation Authority (IL)
Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County
San Francisco Metropolitan Transportation Authority
San Mateo County Transit District
Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority
Southeastern Pennsylvania Transit Authority
Smart Growth America
TransitCenter, Inc.
Transportation for America
U.S. Conference of Mayors
Utah Transit Authority
VPSI
WageWorks
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

CC: The Honorable Harry Reid, Senate Majority Leader
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader
The Honorable John Boehner, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, House Minority Leader
The Honorable Max Baucus, Chairman, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable Orrin Hatch, Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee
The Honorable David Camp, Chairman, House Ways & Means Committee
The Honorable Sander Levin, Ranking Member, House Ways & Means Committee