

October 2026

The Honorable Michael Bennet
United States Senate
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Hickenlooper
United States Senate
316 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Bennet and Senator Hickenlooper:

On behalf of the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), I write to share our thoughts on the *BUILD America 250 Act*, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's proposal to reauthorize federal surface transportation programs for fiscal years 2027 through 2031. As the Senate works to develop its own version of this legislation, there are several provisions worth noting in the House bill of particular importance to DRCOG as our region's metropolitan planning organization and convener of local governments.

Provisions DRCOG Supports

- An increase in Metropolitan Planning (PL) program funding. DRCOG continues to believe PL funds should be authorized as a percentage of overall program funding rather than a fixed dollar amount specified in statute, so that MPO planning capacity keeps pace with overall program growth and federal requirements, but views the increase itself as a positive step.
- A reduction in the required local match for PL funds from 20 percent to 10 percent, easing a longstanding funding burden on MPOs.
- A new opt-in provision allowing MPOs to become direct recipients of PL funds, including direct access to the Federal Highway Administration's Fiscal Management Information System (FMIS) for MPOs that elect direct-recipient status.
- Increases to Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funding and an expansion of STBG project eligibility.
- Streamlined procedures for amending Transportation Improvement Programs (TIPs) and Statewide Transportation Improvement Programs (STIPs).
- Inclusion of three GAO reviews examining how transportation funding reaches communities and how projects are selected, which could improve transparency, consultation, and project delivery going forward.
- Continued and, in several respects, expanded local government access to federal transportation funding generally.

- Dedicated funding for bridge investment and continuation of the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program, the latter of which is unfortunately proposed for a reduced funding level.
- Creation of a new Surface Transportation Accelerator Grant (STAG) program.
- An increase in the Capital Investment Grants' Small Starts ("Streamlined Starts") threshold to \$1 billion, expanding eligibility for transit capital projects.
- NEPA streamlining provisions that would allow prior planning analyses, including those conducted through an MPO planning process, to be used to eliminate alternatives from detailed consideration in an Environmental Impact Statement.

Provisions of Concern

- The bill's consolidated funding pilot program, which would provide lump-sum block grants to 10 states. DRCOG would want assurance that the Denver region would continue to receive its fair share of allocated funding if Colorado were selected to participate.
- Elimination of the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI), Carbon Reduction Program (CRP), and PROTECT formula programs. DRCOG notes that continuing eligibilities under other formula programs, which may in some respects be easier to access, could partially offset this loss.
- The bill does not update the data underlying formula funding allocations, including population distribution data, an issue DRCOG has raised previously and continues to believe warrants attention for fast growing regions of the country, like ours.

More Significant Concerns

- Loss of advance appropriations for a variety of programs (especially transit programs), which have provided valuable funding certainty for multi-year projects.
- A significant decrease in funding for the Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program.
- A funding decrease for the SS4A program, notwithstanding the program's retention.

Overall, DRCOG believes the House bill offers a lot of positive benefits, although there continue to be several areas that warrant significant attention as the Senate develops its own proposal.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these priorities further with you and your staff as the Senate begins its work on surface transportation reauthorization. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,