

April , 2011

The Honorable John L. Mica  
Chairman  
Committee on Transportation  
and Infrastructure  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation  
and Infrastructure  
2163 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable John J. Duncan, Jr.  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit  
B-376 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Highways and Transit  
B-375 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Mica, Ranking Member Rahall, Chairman Duncan and Ranking Member DeFazio:

We write to express our strong support for continuing the successful Recreational Trails Program (RTP) in the surface transportation reauthorization bill.

The philosophy behind the RTP is simple: fuel taxes collected from non-highway users should benefit those who paid the taxes. This is similar to the Wallop-Breaux program, where boaters benefit from the fuel taxes they pay. As the Committee works to streamline and consolidate programs, it should continue to recognize the unique character of this program.

Since its creation in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) in 1991, the RTP has brought new economic vitality to communities across the nation, helped Americans to be active and healthy, and unified often-divided trail interests to craft state trail plans and aid all trail interests. More than 15,000 projects have been funded under this program to date, including trail corridor purchases, trail construction and maintenance and environmental mitigation.

We were pleased that the RTP has been funded under every reauthorization since 1991, and we request that adequate and fair funding be including in the next reauthorization bill. Since the RTP is supported by taxes on fuel used in off-highway recreational vehicles, we request that \$2.5 million be allocated to a DOT study of off-highway recreational fuel use to ensure that the level of RTP funding reflects the federal fuel taxes paid by off-highway users. Finally, we ask that the funds allocated to the FHWA to administer the RTP each year be established at a base of \$840,000 (current law) or as 1% of actual funds available, whichever is higher, to ensure that sufficient administrative resources are available for this valuable program.

Thank you for your consideration of the successful and unique Recreational Trails Program.

Sincerely,

