



September 28, 2015

The Honorable Randy Hultgren
Congressman, District 14
2455 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Hultgren:

We are writing you on behalf of the Counties in Northeastern Illinois and our pressing infrastructure needs in the Chicago metropolitan region. As County Board Chairman/President, we see first-hand the infrastructure needs in our respective Counties and the economic development linkages infrastructure investments and improvements can bring to our region. As Congress moves forward on multi-year surface transportation authorization bill, we urge you to include programmatic funding in the legislation for projects of national or regional importance. Just as importantly, we would also strongly encourage the inclusion of specific legislative language ensuring the equitable distribution of U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) discretionary grants in urban AND suburban areas in large metropolitan areas with a population over 8 million.

The USDOT Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) discretionary grant program has never been authorized but has received seven rounds of funding. Though the goals of this program are important and needed, there appears to be a bias on how the vast majority of the funds are awarded and suburban projects appear to be often ignored. For instance, a September 2014 U.S. Government Accountability Office report, the investigative and audit arm of Congress cited that 73 percent of TIGER V funds were awarded to urban projects. Considering the last several rounds of TIGER included a roughly 25 percent rural set-aside requirement, suburban projects were left to fight over the remaining 2 percent of funding. Transportation networks in large metropolitan cities and suburbs need to complement one another and the best way to do that is to ensure that infrastructure needs are met for the entire region, which must include the suburbs.

The DRIVE Act, which was passed by the Senate on July 30, 2015, includes a program called Assistance for Major Projects Program (AMPP). This program is similar to the TIGER program and would award a total of \$2.4 billion over six years through competitive grants for projects of high importance to a community, region, or the nation. We encourage the House to either improve upon this program or craft its own program that includes provisions to ensure the equitable distribution of these funds to include suburban areas. Without this provision, metropolitan areas will not be able to maintain a comprehensive transportation system thereby destroying system performance and increasing congestion. This program should also focus the limited federal grant funds to projects that promote multi-jurisdictional collaboration and that truly benefit the region as a whole, not just one community or piece of a region. We should invest equitably throughout all jurisdictions.



We thank you for your leadership in Congress and for your attention to transportation and infrastructure issues. Accordingly, we appreciate your consideration of our request and we look forward to working with you on this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Toni Preckwinkle in blue ink.

Toni Preckwinkle
Cook County President

Handwritten signature of Dan Cronin in black ink.

Dan Cronin
DuPage County Chair

Handwritten signature of Chris Lauzen in black ink.

Chris Lauzen
Kane County Chair

Handwritten signature of Aaron Lawlor in black ink.

Aaron Lawlor
Lake County Chair

Handwritten signature of Joseph Gottemoller in black ink.

Joseph Gottemoller
McHenry County Chair

Handwritten signature of Lawrence M. Walsh in black ink.

Larry Walsh
Will County Executive