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June 16, 2020

The Hon. Peter A. DeFazio
Chairman
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Hon. Sam Graves
Ranking Member
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,

On behalf of 14,000 members of the National Association of Manufacturers, the largest manufacturing association in the United States representing small and large manufacturers in every industrial sector and in all 50 states, we appreciate efforts to schedule a mark-up and move a surface transportation authorization out of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee well-ahead of the upcoming September 30 FAST Act deadline.

The economy remains fragile. Manufacturing alone lost 1,370,000 jobs between February and April, and although 225,000 manufacturing jobs returning in May was a positive sign, we have a long way to go. For manufacturers, the prospect of a surface transportation authorization is a bright spot that can have the impact of supporting long-term economic growth, mobility and sustainability. Over the past several years manufacturers have built a platform around the bipartisan concept of “Building to Win” and believe a substantial investment in modernizing our nation’s infrastructure would create jobs, boost economic growth, save lives and help secure America’s mantle of economic leadership in the world.

While manufacturers appreciate the funding levels included in H.R. 7095, the INVEST in America Act, the House of Representatives has not shared with stakeholders or the American people the proposed funding streams for this additional revenue beyond what the Highway Trust Fund can currently support. During this uncertain and unprecedented time of economic hardship, manufacturers request that Congress provide more transparency for a proposal of this size and scope. Additionally, several provisions of the proposal add new regulatory hurdles and costs that would have tremendous impact to the freight systems and services that support manufacturing. New demands placed on the operation of freight railroads, including crew-size mandates and increased cost-shares for new rail crossing projects, will only add to challenges in an uncertain economic environment when freight traffic is down for the foreseeable future.

The FAST Act of 2015 was a successful approach to surface transportation that advanced investments in highways, transit systems and critical transportation safety programs all while reducing red tape and needless regulation during the planning and building phases of an infrastructure project. We urge the committee to expand upon that success and go further to support the codification of a “One Federal Decision” approach to managing environmental reviews and permitting. Manufacturers support efforts to improve mobility, the environment and broader efforts to build resiliency into infrastructure but H.R. 7095 would add new paperwork burdens and additional red tape to execute major infrastructure projects. Further, manufacturers cannot support the repeal of Section 828 of the FAA Modernization and Reform Act of 2013 in

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H.R. 7095 that would eliminate consistent international regulations governing the air transportation of lithium batteries that are important for safety, enforcement and global compliance.

For generations, manufacturers have designed solutions to solve great challenges, and we are ready to work with you to provide manufacturers with the certainty they need in this challenging and unprecedented environment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robyn M. Boerstling". The signature is written in a cursive style with a light blue background behind it.

Robyn M. Boerstling

Cc: The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee