

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 22, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

We urge you to review and update regulations that jeopardize the availability of Emergency Relief funds in the aftermath of natural disasters and catastrophic events. Specifically, we ask that you extend the initial deadline for construction obligation to ensure our states and communities that are impacted by natural disasters have adequate time to utilize such funds to repair transportation infrastructure.

Under current regulations, the Department is allowed to begin to claw back Emergency Relief funding for highway and public transit projects if those projects do not initiate construction by the end of the second fiscal year following the year in which the disaster occurred. While states can apply for extensions provided in one-year increments for delays “caused by the need for extensive environmental evaluation, litigation, or complex right-of-way acquisition,” the Department has previously denied such requests for a number of projects to repair disaster damage.

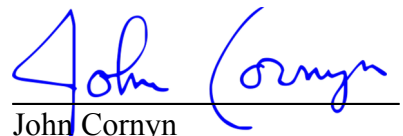
As Americans grapple with severe natural disasters and extreme weather, we believe that states and communities also need practical requirements to ensure that they have a reasonable period of time to carry out significant and often complex projects necessary to repair or reconstruct transportation assets after a disaster occurs. As such, we ask that you update Emergency Relief program regulations to extend the construction start deadline to the end of the fourth fiscal year following the year in which the disaster occurred for permanent repair projects.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. We look forward to continuing to work with you to build more resilient infrastructure and help communities recover from disasters.

Sincerely,



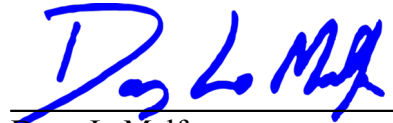
Alex Padilla
United States Senator



John Cornyn
United States Senator



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



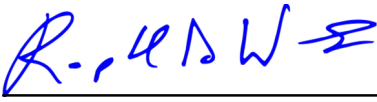
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Raphael G. Warnock
United States Senator




Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



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U.S. Senator



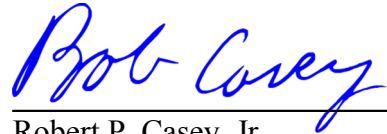
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Brian Fitzpatrick
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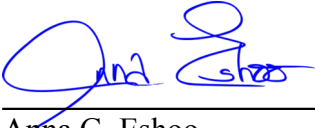
Kevin Brady
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Maria Elvira Salazar
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Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



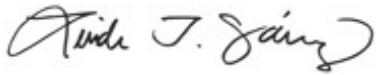
Mike Levin
Member of Congress



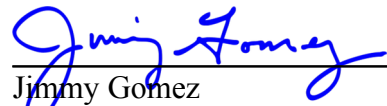
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress




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Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Nuria Fernandez, Administrator, Federal Transit Administration
The Honorable Stephanie Pollack, Deputy Administrator, Federal Highway Administration