



April 4, 2017

The Bus Coalition
1001 Office Park Road, Ste. 105
West Des Moines, IA 50265
Website: www.buscoalition.com
Email: info@buscoalition.com

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C-Tran, Vancouver, WA

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Snohomish County, WA

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METRO, Houston, TX

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The Honorable Elaine Chao
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Chao:

As FTA works to implement the Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities 2017 competitive grant round, we encourage you to focus scoring consideration on the age and condition of bus fleets and facilities as outlined in the FAST Act.

The only “grant consideration” included in the FAST Act for the Bus and Bus Facilities Competitive Grant states, “In making grants under this subsection, the Secretary shall consider the age and condition of buses, bus fleets, related equipment and bus related facilities.” Our coalition strongly supports the focus on the age and condition of fleet and facilities in FAST to ensure all transit agencies have the ability to address the significant backlog of fleet replacement needs and upgrades to transit facilities. In the 2016 round, we were concerned with the “ladders of opportunity” criteria in the NOFA, which seemed to emphasize capacity expansion projects over the “age and condition” criteria outlined in FAST.

The number of transit buses operating past their useful life increased nearly 40% between 2009 and 2015. Addressing fleet replacement is more pressing today because the bus competitive grant program was eliminated in MAP-21 and the backlog of older buses is impacting the safety of riders and ballooning maintenance costs for cash strapped systems. Similarly, aging transit facilities and equipment need repair and replacement. The Bus and Bus Facility Program is a critical source of funding to help address these costly bus replacement, facility and equipment projects.

The Bus Coalition represents over 140 small, mid-size and large bus transit systems and stakeholders in 36 states throughout the country that transport millions of riders each year to work, medical visits, school and recreation. We greatly appreciate the Federal Transit Administration’s ongoing work to implement the Bus and Bus Facilities Program, which provides vital support to maintain a state of good repair of the nation’s aging bus fleet and supporting facilities.

Thank you for your consideration and support of this important issue. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at JeffH@c-tran.org.

Sincerely,

Jeff Hamm, Chairman
The Bus Coalition

Cc: Senate Banking Committee
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

Membership Contact:
Ed Redfern, Bus Coalition
ed@buscoalition.com / (202) 345-3052

DC Contact:
Joel Rubin, CFM Strategic Communications
joelr@cfmcd.com / (202) 347-9171

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