



April 4, 2017

**The Bus Coalition**

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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:

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, school and play. We greatly appreciate the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) ongoing work to implement Sec. 5339 of 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. As FTA works to implement the 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 transit agencies across the country 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 across the country and maintenance costs for cash strapped systems. Similarly, aging transit facilities and equipment across the country 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 greatly appreciates your help in restoring a state of good repair among the nation's bus fleet and supporting facilities. Thank you for your consideration and support of this important issue. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at [JeffH@c-tran.org](mailto:JeffH@c-tran.org).

Sincerely,

Jeff Hamm, Chairman  
The Bus Coalition

Cc: Senate Banking Committee  
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee