



**The Bus Coalition**

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**Steering Committee**

**Jeff Hamm, Chairman**  
C-Tran, Vancouver, WA

**Todd Morrow, Treasurer**  
Community Transit  
Snohomish County, WA

**Russ Frank**  
METRO, Houston, TX

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San Joaquin RTD, Stockton, CA

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Fayetteville, NC

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Metro Link, Moline, IL

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**Eric Wolf**  
AMTRAN, Altoona, PA

**Stephen Lalli**  
OTA, Oklahoma City, OK

**Ed Benning**  
MTA, Flint, MI

**Len Engel**  
AVTA, Lancaster, CA

April 5, 2017

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
Transportation and Housing Subcommittee  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
Transportation and Housing Subcommittee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jack Reed  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Transportation and Housing Subcommittee  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable David Price  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Transportation and Housing Subcommittee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Collins and Diaz-Balart and Ranking Members Reed and Price:

As your Committees work on FY18 appropriations legislation, the members of The Bus Coalition write to express strong support for full funding for all highway and transit funding levels as authorized in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST) Act. In particular, we support the FY18 authorized level of \$445,500,000 for the Bus and Bus Facility (BBF) Formula Grant Program (5339(a)) and \$301,500,000 for the BBF Competitive Grant Program (5339(c)).

Furthermore, we request the inclusion of report language encouraging the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to base grant criteria for the Competitive BBF Program on the age and condition of bus fleet and facilities as outlined in the FAST Act.


The Bus Coalition is concerned about the state of our rural, suburban and urban bus transit systems. Between 2009 and 2015, the number of transit buses operating past useful life increased nearly 40%. The increase in fleet age occurred despite bus grants funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Absent ARRA funds, the increase in the number of old buses would have been much greater.

We expect the number of older buses on our streets to climb significantly over the coming years as resources have been diverted over time from bus transit programs. Similarly, aging transit facilities and equipment need repair and replacement. The BBF Program is a critical source of funding to help address these costly bus replacement, facility and equipment projects.

Regarding report language, The Bus Coalition supports including language in the Committee Report encouraging FTA to base competitive grant criteria on the age and condition of bus fleet and facilities as outlined in the FAST Act. The only "grant consideration" included in FAST states that, "In making grants under this subsection, the Secretary shall consider the age and condition of buses, bus fleets, related equipment and bus related facilities."

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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 BBF 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.

Thus, we support including the following language in the Committee report:

*“The Committee strongly encourages the Federal Transit Administration to follow the guidance set forth in the FAST Act when developing scoring criteria for the competitive Bus and Bus Facilities Program. Per the legislation, age and condition of buses, bus fleets, related equipment and bus related facilities is the primary and only consideration included in the FAST Act.”*

With over 140 coalition members and a growing footprint now in 36 states, The Bus Coalition represents small, medium and large transit agencies, state transit associations and bus manufacturers and suppliers across the country. Each year, our buses and facilities help transport millions of riders to work, doctor visits, school and recreational activities. To ensure these services continue to operate efficiently and effectively, the Bus Coalition strongly supports the BBF Program, which helps our transit agencies strive to meet a state of good repair.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out to our DC contact, Joel Rubin, at [joelr@cfmdc.com](mailto:joelr@cfmdc.com) or 202.347.9171. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Hamm'.

Jeff Hamm, Chairman  
The Bus Coalition

Cc: Senate Banking Committee  
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee