



**Concrete Reinforcing  
Steel Institute**

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## **CONCRETE REINFORCING STEEL INSTITUTE POSITION PAPER TRANSPORTATION REAUTHORIZATION LEGISLATION**

*"Reinforcing the Nation's Infrastructure"*

The Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute (CRSI) fully supports the federal government's role in planning and delivering transportation services and projects to meet the needs of the country's daily living, commerce and recreational needs. To meet our growing transportation needs, CRSI urges Congress to promptly pass a reauthorization transportation bill, preserve a dedicated highway—transportation trust fund, provide financial resources to support a \$500 billion dollar program over six years, and provide clear unambiguous policies and programs aimed at solving critical transportation problems facing our country.

### **CRSI: Who we are. What we do.**

Founded in 1924, the Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute is a trade association that stands as the authoritative resource for information related to steel reinforced concrete construction. CRSI represents over 80% of the U.S. manufacturers, fabricators and placers of steel reinforcing bar and related products, as well as hundreds of design professionals. Our members are capable of producing over eight million tons of reinforcing steel per year and employ thousands of people throughout the country. It is used in over 90% of U.S. bridges, over 50% of the nation's heavy-trafficked pavements, along with median barriers, pipe, sound walls, and many other products. Serving the needs of architects, engineers and construction professionals, CRSI is a leading source of technical expertise and education in transportation-related products, including technical publications, design aids, software programs, educational seminars, promotional activities, membership functions and design award programs.

### **Transportation Reauthorization**

On August 10, 2005, President Bush signed into law the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). With guaranteed funding for highways, highway safety, and public transportation totaling \$244.1 billion, this bill continued the nearly 100-year history of the Federal government playing a major role in transportation and promotion of interstate commerce in the U.S. This bill was to expire on September 30, 2009, but has been extended through December 31, 2010. Congress, in harmony with the Administration, is laying the groundwork for reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, American Association of Highway and Transportation Officials, American Road and Transportation Builders Association, Department of Transportation needs studies, and many other well-respected transportation organizations believe that authorization should increase to no less than \$500 billion over a six year time period.

To fund reauthorization at this level, revenue into the Highway Trust Fund needs to be increased by nearly 40%. Revenue in the Trust Fund can be increased through a combination of fuel fee increases and supplemented with private sector funding or innovative infrastructure banking.

## **Transportation: The Backbone of the American Way of Life**

Ever since 1906 with the first national highway bill, the United States has recognized the importance of efficient transportation in promoting commerce, access, mobility, safety, and recreation. Over the last 100 years, priorities have adjusted to the country's needs, but the commitment to high quality transportation has not.

Today, the Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute believes that the nation is at a cross-road, perhaps the most significant time since the passing of the 1956 Interstate Highway System Act. We know we need to improve our bridge and pavement infrastructure, improve our safety record, move freight quicker and more efficiently, reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, improve trip time reliability, minimize congestion, and improve mass transportation as a viable alternate. We add to these needs our ways to address an aging population, a need for and improving our environment, and our continued promotion of innovation in research, training, and education of the transportation workforce.

The United State's economy is on the way to a slow, uneven recovery, after one of the most devastating recessions in many decades. This recovery has left governmental agencies scrambling for resources as tax revenue has decreased with many private sector companies undertaking downsizing, reduced pay, and reduced hours. Finding resources and funding to keep basic government services as well as keeping private sector companies functioning, is going to be difficult and challenging.

It is within this backdrop that Congress and the Administration begins to focus on transportation reauthorization. Now is the time for the government to act in funding and solving our transportation needs. This will create thousands of American jobs related to design, construction, and manufacturing products for construction with the end result of putting our business and employees back to work, and growing America again.

## **Transportation: Communication and Cooperation**

Solutions to these problems will only come with cooperation at the Federal, State, and local levels, as well as the private sector. Solutions are not limited to any one sector of the country or our industry. CRSI believes that cooperation from all political parties, from all diverse opinions, must come together to pass reauthorization legislation along with funding increases. To support this cooperation, CRSI is working with the construction, steel, and concrete industries as well as other coalitions to find common ground and promote cooperation to enact sound and strong policies. CRSI

is urging its members to visit their elected representatives to promote passage of a robust transportation bill, to offer insight into transportation's importance to the economy and our quality of life, and to offer ways to make our infrastructure better through high quality, long-life products such as reinforcing steel used in concrete.

## **Transportation: CRSI Transportation Positions**

CRSI supports the passage of a timely, comprehensive, visionary, multi-year reauthorization legislation that will address four visionary tracks:

- 1. Infrastructure** – improve our bridges and pavements with high quality, long-life construction, rehabilitation, and preservation strategies and asset management principles.
- 2. Mobility and Reliability** – identify and apply innovative ways to move people and goods.
- 3. Safety** – continue to find ways to reduce fatalities and accidents of transportation users and our construction workforce.
- 4. Sustainability/Livability** – develop comprehensive policies that define, measure and promote sustainability/livability in all aspects of transportation.

CRSI supports the preservation of Highway Trust Fund and specifically preserves the fire walls and funding guarantees which segregate highway user fees from general revenues.

CRSI supports an increase in fees to support an overall authorization level of at least \$500B, a figure well supported by many studies in both the private and public sector. The current 18.5 cents per gallon only generates \$40B per year, about half of what is needed to support a program at this level.

CRSI supports the promotion of private sector finance initiatives through public-private partnerships and through a Federal Infrastructure Bank. Conventional gas tax increases alone should not and cannot finance future needs.

CRSI supports clear freight policies that consider higher gross axle loads as a means of promoting safety, fuel efficiencies, and lower emissions. The US has one of the lowest gross weight limits (80,000 pounds) in the developed world and clearly can go to 97,000 pounds for a six-axle truck.

For each of the four tracks listed above, CRSI supports the establishment of performance goals and measures that foster financial and technical flexibility along with accountability at the State and local level.

- CRSI particularly supports high performance standards for bridges that will finally support a significant reduction in structurally and functionally deficient bridges.
- CRSI also supports high performance standard for pavements that promote long life with minimal maintenance and rehabilitation over a significant period of time. CRSI especially supports high performance standards on our critical commerce facilities and corridors.

- CRSI supports the development of financing and whole life cost models that better show the value of long life products with higher initial costs and the impact that discount rates and inflation rates have on that value.
- CRSI supports defining, measuring, and attaining of sustainability and livability goals as a key part of transportation reauthorization in a way that promotes quality of life.

CRSI supports innovative research, training, and general education of both the transportation workforce and the general public. To this end, CRSI supports the development of research needs in cooperation with the industries and labor force that supply the products and services to the transportation community.

## **Transportation: Funding is Critical**

CRSI firmly believes in transportation investment as a way to improve our economy, our mobility, our standard of living, and our environment, without bankrupting our current economy or that of our children. It is time to act in a bipartisan way, to agree on innovative transportation policies and find ways to pay for the needs of the present and future. Investment in our system is critical. CRSI stands firmly behind these positions and will work to build a better America.

### *“Reinforcing the Nation’s Infrastructure”*

*Approved by CRSI Board of Directors, May 2010*

*For more information, contact CRSI at 847.517.1200 in Schaumburg, IL or at 202.744.4175 in Washington, DC or write to us at the address below.*