

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-2902

September 18, 2014

The Honorable John A. Boehner  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Speaker:

In East Concord, NH, residents have to wait twice as long as normal for ambulances to respond when called. Soon, they will also have to drive more than 15 minutes out of the way to get to work. That is because the Sewalls Falls Bridge, a critical transportation link with a reduced weight limit, will be closing permanently on December 1, 2014.

I bring this story to your attention because it didn't have to happen. The City of Concord, NH has been working closely with the New Hampshire Department of Transportation and the U.S. Department of Transportation on plans to replace the aging bridge, which will turn 100 next year. The proper approvals were granted and the design for the replacement bridge is nearly finished. The project was on track this summer to move forward with bidding, knowing that 80 percent of the \$10 million project would be covered by funding from the federal government.

But then came the prospect of the Highway Trust Fund going broke by August, coupled with months of inaction by Congress to shore up the Fund and avert that crisis. The result was a perfect storm that has delayed funding for the Sewalls Falls Bridge and forced the early closure of the aging structure.

This is just one example of why the Highway Trust Fund is so important to New Hampshire and communities across our country. Without reliable funding we will continue to see our transportation infrastructure degrade, jeopardizing public safety and hurting our economy. More than 30 million people visit New Hampshire every year, making tourism one of our state's largest economic drivers. But without safe and efficient roads and bridges visitors won't come, and our economy will pay the price.

The extension of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21) and authorization for the Highway Trust Fund is scheduled to expire on May 31, 2015. This will be right as states and businesses are planning and starting construction projects, and I am already hearing from businesses in my district who are concerned that uncertainty leading up to the end of May will

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result in many important projects being put on the shelf for the year. We simply cannot afford to let this happen.

I urge you to work with Republicans and Democrats to craft a common sense, long-term reauthorization of the Highway Trust Fund and our surface transportation programs by the end of this year. Too much is at stake if we let time run out. We cannot kick the can down the road any further.

Thank you for your attention to this issue of significant importance to the people of my district. I appreciate your consideration of my request and I stand ready to work with both parties to find common ground on a full six-year reauthorization of our surface transportation programs. The people of East Concord, NH and families all across this great nation are counting on us to get this done.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ann McLane Kuster". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the name.

Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress