

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

May 30, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Chao:

We write to urge the Department of Transportation (DOT) to continue advancing Capital Investment Grant (CIG) projects through the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts pipeline. While the Administration's budget proposes to phase out this program, Congress has demonstrated its clear intent to continue CIG by allocating robust funding for the program in the FY17 appropriations bill. It is essential that we advance projects like the Hudson River Tunnels and the Portal Bridge North through the pipeline in an expeditious manner, and avoid unnecessary delays and red tape for some of the most important infrastructure projects in the nation.

CIG is one of the most rigorous programs in the federal government. Projects go through multiple rounds of review; rely on partnerships across all levels of government and the private sector; and are rated on their cost effectiveness, local financial commitment, and mobility, congestion relief, environmental, and economic development benefits. While many federal transportation projects have an 80 percent federal share, all current New Starts and Core Capacity projects in the pipeline have a federal share of 50 percent or less, allowing for significant leveraging of federal dollars.

Having to meet these objectives and secure support from multiple levels of government ensures that CIG projects are carefully developed and refined—and as a result, these projects are the best of the best. They are also geographically and modally diverse, ranging from commuter rail projects in major metropolitan areas, to light rail in rapidly-growing communities, to bus rapid transit serving smaller or rural communities. For these reasons, the CIG program has drawn strong, bipartisan support in Congress, mostly recently securing \$2.4 billion in funding for FY17.

CIG is a critical linchpin for moving ahead with the Gateway Program, a comprehensive set of projects designed to rehabilitate infrastructure and enhance transit and rail service along the Northeast Corridor that includes a new tunnel under the Hudson River and a new Portal Bridge. The Hudson River Tunnel, which is currently in the Project Development stage of New Starts, and the Portal Bridge North, which is in the Project Development stage of Core Capacity, have the potential to create jobs, improve economic competitiveness, and significantly leverage federal funding to improve mobility and quality of life.

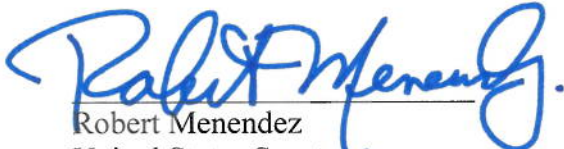
These are true projects of national significance, supporting mobility and access to jobs in a region responsible for 20 percent of the nation's GDP, or \$3.7 trillion. A shutdown of the Northeast Corridor, which will be a reality without the replacement of the Hudson River Tunnels


and the Portal Bridge, will cost \$100 million per day in wasted time and lost economic opportunities, and would create a transportation disaster for transit riders and drivers alike.

The importance of the project is demonstrated by the diverse set of stakeholders working to make it a reality on both sides of the aisle and both sides of the Hudson River. The project is supported by the Governors of New York and New Jersey, Amtrak, New Jersey Transit, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and by numerous elected officials at the federal, state, and local level. The U.S. Department of Transportation has been a vital partner to this point; however, failing to move projects through the CIG pipeline threatens this partnership and has the potential to seriously delay or impair the Gateway Program.

We urge you to consider moving meritorious projects like the Hudson River Tunnels and the Portal Bridge North through the CIG pipeline, and stand ready to work with you to advance these vital projects.

Sincerely,


  
Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

  
Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator


  
Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress


  
Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress

  
Albio Sires  
Member of Congress

  
Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress

  
Leonard Lance  
Member of Congress

  
Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

  
Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress

  
Frank LoBiondo  
Member of Congress



Chris Smith  
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress