January 7, 2003

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd  
Chair, Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Byrd:

As the House Appropriations Committee considers the appropriation levels for the fiscal year 2003 bills, we urge you to fully fund the Federal-Aid Highway program. The U.S. Conference of Mayors strongly supports a FY03 Federal-Aid Highway program appropriation level of at least $31.8 billion to maintain the fiscal year 2002 budget authority as well as a FY03 Federal Transit Appropriation of $7.3 billion.

With the national economy continuing to lag, this is not the time for any reduction in highway funding. Each one billion dollars in federal highway funding translates into 47,500 well-paying construction and construction related jobs – and the nation’s production sector experiences an increase of three billion dollars in sales. Conversely, cuts in spending will have a equal, but negative, impact on our economy. The impact of any reduction would be immediately felt across the nation, further hindering recovery.

Mayors from both political parties urge you to maintain the Senate’s funding level commitment of $39.1 billion in the full-year appropriation bill.

As always, the nation’s mayors appreciate your efforts and look forward to working with the Congress and Administration to ensure the sustained viability of our nation’s transportation system.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]

Thomas M. Menino  
Mayor of Boston  
President  

Kenneth L. Barr  
Mayor of Fort Worth  
Chair, Transportation & Communication Committee  

J. Thomas Cochran  
Executive Director