

December 4, 2009

Senator Richard Durbin
U.S. Senate
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Steny Hoyer
U.S. House of Representatives
1705 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Byron Dorgan
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Representative George Miller
U.S. House of Representatives
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Durbin and Dorgan and Representatives Hoyer and Miller:

Recently senior executives from across the construction equipment industry have traveled to Washington to meet with you and your colleagues to share the dire economic conditions facing our sector.

Our industry firmly believes the only near-term and sustainable hope of revitalizing our industry, which has lost 555,000 jobs, is the enactment of a robust, fully-funded, six-year federal surface transportation program authorization. As long as the construction equipment industry remains mired in depression, it will continue to be a drag on the entire U.S. economy. Any job creation legislation must include or be coupled with a commitment to pass a long term highway and transit reauthorization.

Unlike most government spending, strategic capital *investments* in our national highway, bridge and public transportation network create long-living assets that return value to American families, businesses and the U.S. economy for current and future generations—value far exceeding their cost.

Enactment of a multi-year transportation bill is a unique opportunity to address two major national economic challenges by promoting job creation and incentivizing capital investment. Strategic *investments* in transportation infrastructure can reduce productivity-robbing, energy-wasting, and emissions-creating traffic congestion. They can also reduce health care costs by lowering the number of traffic accidents caused by poor road conditions.

Two blue-ribbon, bipartisan commissions initiated by the Congress in 2005 have provided a consensus blueprint for action and financing. They call for policy principles we embrace: a surface transportation program that is performance-based, transparent and fully accountable to taxpayers, and user financed. And we heartily agree with their conclusion that sufficient revenue must be raised to fund new capital *investments* in highway and transit capacity to

facilitate the movement of people and freight. These investments are absolutely critical to America's future economic competitiveness.

We readily acknowledge the political challenges associated with financing the next surface transportation program authorization. But the obvious can no longer be ignored. Congress must act to reauthorize the federal surface transportation bill now and "start us up USA!"

Sincerely,



Dennis J. Slater
President
Association of Equipment Manufacturers



J. Toby Mack
President & CEO
Associated Equipment Dealers