

February 28, 2023

The Honorable Peter Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of America's public transportation industry, which directly employs 450,000 workers and supports millions of private-sector jobs, I write to strongly urge the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to support projects that will improve our nation's public transit, passenger rail, and multimodal infrastructure in your selection of Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant recipients.

In August 2022, DOT announced more than \$2.2 billion in RAISE capital grant awards to 166 projects in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Of these funds, APTA estimates that DOT provided \$418 million to 31 public transportation-related capital projects, equal to 18.6 percent of available funding. The public transportation investment is, by percentage, slightly less than FY 2021 and greater than FY 2020.

However, this percentage of public transportation investment is significantly less than the historical average. From FY 2009 to FY 2016, the percentage of RAISE grants awarded to public transportation-related projects was approximately 33 percent. Following a sharp decrease in FY 2017, public transportation awards have seen steady growth, yet remain significantly below historical averages. See APTA Policy Brief, *RAISE Grants are Critical for Public Transportation Projects*, February 2023.

Although DOT has partially reoriented the RAISE Grant Program to multimodal priorities in the last two years, APTA strongly urges DOT to direct a significantly greater percentage of RAISE Grant funds to vital public transit and passenger rail projects.

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Moreover, we applaud the Department's decision to prioritize improving racial equity, reducing the impacts of climate change, and creating good-paying jobs when evaluating RAISE project selections. Public transportation projects directly address each of these key priorities. Every \$1 invested in public transportation generates \$5 in economic returns, and every \$1 billion invested in public transportation creates and supports approximately 50,000 jobs. In addition, a typical trip on public transit emits 55 percent fewer greenhouse gas emissions than driving or ridehailing alone. Finally, public transportation provides access to opportunities, including jobs, health care, and education. Given the synergy of the Biden-Harris Administration's priorities and public transportation, we are confident that projects that support critical public transportation initiatives will rate very highly under RAISE grant criteria.

The RAISE Grant program is an extremely valuable resource for communities to carry out critical public transportation programs, and we strongly urge the Department to direct a significantly greater percentage of RAISE grant funds to these vital, community-enhancing projects.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Paul P. Skoutelas

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Nuria Fernandez, Administrator, Federal Transit Administration
The Honorable Amit Bose, Administrator, Federal Railroad Administration