CALIFORNIA STATE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY

Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Governor

Brian P. Kelly
Secretary

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October 12, 2015

The Honorable Jim Inhofe
Chairman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman and Madam Ranking Member:

California fully supports your efforts to develop a long-term reauthorization to the current highway legislation the reflects national priorities, states' sovereignty, and the federal government's responsibilities. MAP-21 set policy direction for continued preservation of the National High System; however, MAP-21's funding levels fell short for the Tribal Transportation Program (TTP). For this reauthorization, we ask that California Native American Tribes be fully included in the solutions you develop, and that the federal government's trust obligations to tribes be adequately met.

California is home to many tribes with whom the state has an important relationship, as set forth and affirmed in state and federal law. Under Executive Order B-10-11, Governor Brown further recognized and reaffirmed the inherent rights of California tribes, tribal self-governance, and their importance in the state. California's consensus principles for MAP-21 reauthorization reflect this commitment to tribes and includes support for:

- ⇨ The underlying principles represented in the Tribal Transportation Unity Act, which include easing the transfer of Federal aid funds for tribal transportation projects, improving Bureau of Indian Affairs Right of Way management, and improving the speed and efficiency in getting emergency relief funding to tribes.
- ⇨ An overall increase in Federal transportation spending, including an increase in funding for the Tribal Transportation Program.
- ⇨ Restoring Highway Trust Fund support for the Tribal High Priority Projects program as proposed by the GROW AMERICA Act.
- ⇨ Establishing a Tribal Self-Governance program at U.S. DOT that will streamline grant funding and administration between the Federal and tribal governments.

California and tribal governments mutually recognize that traffic safety involves saving lives and reducing injuries. Congress must provide robust funding that can be applied to safety projects aimed at reducing fatalities, including rural areas where fatality rates are the highest. Increased funding would help reduce alcohol-involved crashes, increase safety awareness for all-terrain vehicle (ATV) use, and enhance seat belt and child safety seat compliance. It may also be beneficial to consider processes whereby recipients of U.S. Department of Transportation discretionary and competitive grants (e.g., Federal Transit Administration and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration funds) could be eligible to receive funding in a streamlined and expeditious manner. The California Department of Transportation is currently consulting with tribes on this issue.

Your consideration of this request will help address the backlog of deteriorating or nonexistent tribal transportation infrastructure, promote tribal economic development, and reduce motor vehicle fatalities and pedestrian deaths. Thank you.

Sincerely,

BRIAN P. KELLY
Secretary

cc: Senator Feinstein
California Congressional Delegation
Malcolm Dougherty, Caltrans Director
Caltrans Native American Advisory Committee (NAAC)