

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

June 27, 2012

The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
Committee on Environment and Public Works  
410 Dirksen Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Mica  
Committee on Transportation and  
Infrastructure  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

### **RE: Metropolitan Planning Organizations**

Dear Senator Boxer and Chairman Mica:

We are writing to urge the transportation reauthorization conference committee to maintain existing metropolitan planning law (23 U.S.C. §134). As our nation grows and transportation demands become more diverse, it is vitally important that metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) continue to serve as a unified voice for their local governments in transportation planning and investment decision-making. This is particularly true in a state such as California and more specifically in the Central Valley and along the Central Coast.

California incorporates a significant amount of local involvement in its transportation planning through MPOs. More than 75 percent of the Surface Transportation Program (STP) funding has been programmed by MPOs and smaller Regional Transportation Planning Agencies (RTPAs) for over 20 years. In addition, California has charged these agencies with regulatory and funding responsibilities. However, the population requirements contained in MAP-21 will not only create uncertainty for California planning processes, but will make it more difficult for local officials to participate in many areas of the state. For these reasons we respectfully request your support for maintaining current law with regard to the population thresholds required for MPOs, as well as for the 62.5 percent funding share distributed to MPOs under STP (renamed the Transportation Mobility Program or TMP under MAP-21). We also would like to emphasize that the short-term nature of the proposed reauthorization bill would make it difficult, if not impossible, to implement the MPO changes in the Senate bill.

Large and small, urban and rural, MPOs manage many federal and state natural resource and air quality environmental regulations, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act (Section 106) and the Uniform Relocation Act. In addition, MPOs coordinate, plan and program federal, state and local transportation funding, and help their local governments to align available funding with environmental permitting applications. Federal and state agencies also come together under the MPO umbrella to identify and resolve legal or regulatory challenges before they become problems. In these roles, MPOs are an important part

of streamlining the federal and state regulatory process and should be retained to continue their activities on behalf of local governments.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Please feel free to contact us with any questions or for more information.

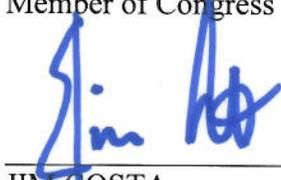
Sincerely,



DENNIS CARDOZA  
Member of Congress



JEFF DENHAM  
Member of Congress



JIM COSTA  
Member of Congress



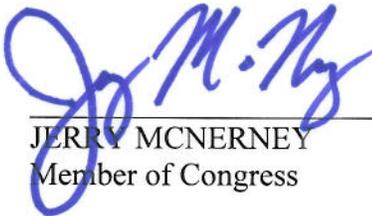
DEVIN NUNES  
Member of Congress



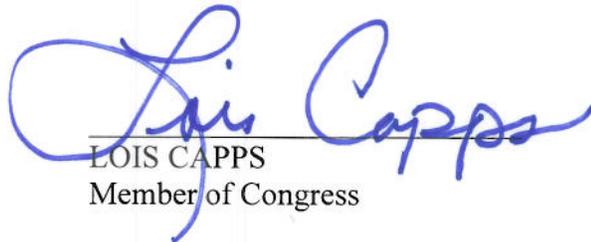
SAM FARR  
Member of Congress



DAN LUNGREN  
Member of Congress



JERRY MCNERNEY  
Member of Congress



LOIS CAPPS  
Member of Congress