

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 22, 2013

The Honorable Tom Latham
Chairman
Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing &
Urban Development Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ed Pastor
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on
Transportation, Housing &
Urban Development Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Latham and Ranking Member Pastor:

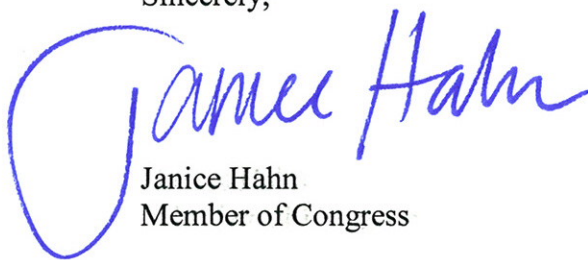
We write to express our strong support for the New Starts program administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA). We urge you to fund this national program at \$1.9 billion, the amount authorized in last year's surface reauthorization bill, *Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)*. Fully funding this program would help support initiatives that both enhance Los Angeles County's existing transit system and strengthen the ridership on a number of other planned transit systems that are slated to be built across the county over the next decade.


The New Starts program moves America forward, providing access and sustaining commerce in our economy. The program, which has existed for over five decades, provides critical funding for new fixed guide way construction -- including commuter rail, subway, light rail, ferries and bus rapid transit projects -- in our communities. Such infrastructure spending not only creates jobs, but spurs economic development, eases congestion, and fosters the development of safer, environmentally sustainable and more livable communities by connecting commuters to places of employment, commercial businesses, educational institutions, health centers, and residential areas on a daily basis.

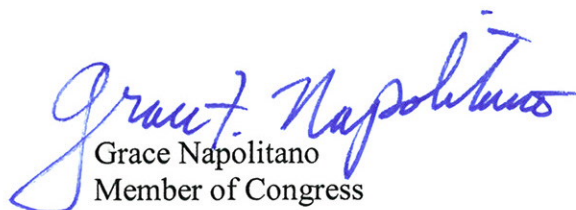
Congress has played a significant role in structuring the New Starts program, with strict criteria, set forth in statute, requiring the FTA to rigorously evaluate and rate New Starts projects according to their projected capital costs, operating costs, and ability to commit local funds to finance at least 40% of the project's construction. In addition, the FTA is required to examine each project's cost effectiveness, mobility improvements, environmental benefits, land use, operating efficiencies, and economic development. Only those projects that achieve established rating thresholds can receive a full funding grant agreement under which Federal funding can be committed.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your continued support for a robust New Starts program.


Sincerely,



Janice Hahn
Member of Congress



Henry Waxman
Member of Congress



Grace Napolitano
Member of Congress


Tony Cardenas
Member of Congress


Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress


Judy Chu
Member of Congress


Brad Sherman
Member of Congress


Karen Bass
Member of Congress


Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress


Gloria Negrete McLeod
Member of Congress


Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress