

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-3324

March 29, 2011

Mr. Gary Abbott
Executive Vice President
The Associated General Contractors of New Hampshire Inc.
48 Grandview Rd
Bow, NH 03304-3406

Dear Mr. Abbott:

Thank you for taking the time to share your comments with me about transportation spending. I appreciate hearing from you.

New Hampshire's transportation infrastructure is an invaluable part of our state's economy as well as the broader New England economy. The distribution of federal transportation funding is generally authorized through periodic "highway bills." The most recent authorization legislation was the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), enacted August 10, 2005, as Public Law 109-59. This authorization expired at the end of fiscal year 2009, and the current stop-gap authorization extension expires at the end of the fiscal year.

I understand your frustration with the delayed reauthorization of the highway bill. As I understand it, the complexity of the surface transportation bill, mechanics of the highway trust fund, and controversies over state funding have, unfortunately, delayed reauthorization initiatives in the past. SAFETEA-LU also included 5,671 earmarks, in part, to garner support for passage. Many of these earmarks were congressional pet projects, rather than needed transportation priorities. As you may know, I pledged to the people of New Hampshire that I would fight to end earmarks which have too often been abused, and the Congress and the President have agreed to temporarily ban earmarks. Given the importance of transportation funding in the U.S., I am optimistic this transition away from earmarking will lead to a more efficient and effective use of transportation dollars.

Currently, the relevant committees of jurisdiction in the Senate and House of Representatives are beginning to hold hearings in preparation for a new, full six year transportation reauthorization bill. As a member of the Commerce Committee, I will work to pass a financially responsible, sensible reauthorization bill which addresses our most pressing transportation priorities.

Again, thank you for taking the time to contact me regarding this issue. As your Senator, it is important for me to hear from those I represent regarding the current issues affecting New Hampshire and our country. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kelly A. Ayotte
U. S. Senator

KAA/da