

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2202

July 10, 2009

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chairman
The Honorable Christopher Bond, Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation and Housing and Urban Development
133 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair and Ranking Member:

I am writing to request that you include in the FY 2010 Transportation Appropriations Bill language to permit private funds spent on developing a rapid transit route in Detroit to be used for the required local matching funds for the public rapid transit project under way in Detroit under FTA's New Starts program. The private project is a rapid rail project that will run down Woodward Avenue from Hart Plaza at the river's edge to Grand Boulevard. The public project picks up at Grand Boulevard and runs for another several miles. These projects are connected – one is an extension of the other.

My office worked with the FTA to develop the following language that mirrors other rapid transit projects that have enacted similar legislation.

SEC. _____. Hereafter, the Secretary of Transportation shall rate and evaluate the Woodward Avenue Corridor rapid transit project in the most advantageous way under section 5309(d) of title 49, United States Code, either as one single project or as separate phases of one project: Provided, That the local share of the costs of the Woodward Avenue Corridor project funded under section 5309 shall include any portion of the corridor advanced with 100 percent non-Federal funds.

Michigan's public transit system relies on an all bus fleet because, with the exception of Detroit's People Mover, we have no fixed guide-way system in our state. Michigan is long overdue for a rapid transit corridor and the Woodward Avenue Corridor project will finally give us one. This project will improve public transportation options in Michigan while creating jobs, stimulating economic development and reducing congestion on our roads in a state with the highest unemployment in the nation. Enacting the above language into law is necessary to allow this project to move forward and I urge you to include it in the FY 2010 Transportation Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,



Carl Levin



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