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May 14, 2019

Dear Members of the Illinois General Assembly:

The Council of Mayors of metropolitan Chicago is joining the growing statewide call for sustainable transportation revenues for Illinois, enacted with reforms that earn the public's confidence that funding will be spent wisely.

The Council serves as a vital link between our region's local elected officials and its transportation agencies. Our public is demanding – and deserves – a safe and reliable transportation system, and our regional and state economy depend on it.

Yet across the region, roads, bridges, and transit have been starved of adequate funding for far too long. Nine years have passed since Springfield last passed a capital bill – one that ultimately was inadequate. Across the region, we experience frequent reminders of this lagging investment: falling concrete at Union Station, frequent breakdowns and delays on transit, emergency repairs closing parts of I-80 and Lake Shore Drive in Chicago, crumbling bridges, and thousands of potholes. Nearly a quarter of our region's National Highway System (NHS), almost 10 percent of NHS bridges, and a full third of our transit system is in poor condition.

We must do better. The time for Illinois to invest in transportation in a sustainable consistent way, including local highways and bridges, is now. This requires a more thoughtful approach to adequate and sustainable funding than has been used in the past.

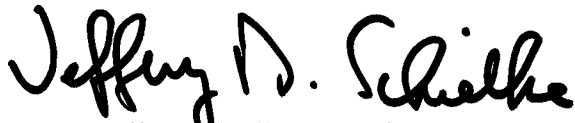
To break the feast-or-famine cycle of transportation funding, the 101st General Assembly must pass a new kind of capital bill this session. It should start with adequate, reliable, and sustainable funding sources and a pay-as-you-go program. We need a genuine fix, with real revenues, not funding gimmicks. It must be coupled with a transparent, data-driven process to select high-performing projects that provide the most public benefit. Everyone who buys groceries, for example, benefits from the transportation system that provides them. But we should not forget that those who use the system most directly derive the most benefit and should pay their fair share of its costs. And the capital bill needs to encourage raising local revenues to invest along with state revenues.

And finally, funding must go to the most urgent priorities, regardless of mode. In metropolitan Chicago, it is just as vital to bring our transit system to a state of

good repair, to continue to serve some 2 million rides each day as it is to insure that our roads and bridge can serve those who must reach areas not served by mass transit. Continuing to allow our trains and busses to become obsolete will not only hurt millions of residents, in particular those who depend on transit to get to jobs, school, and doctor's appointments, but also will negatively affect the region's and state's ability to attract new businesses and jobs. It is, therefore, incumbent upon you to create funding mechanisms and programs that will sustain fully both our mass-transit and our inter-municipality roads and bridges.

We ask you for your leadership in addressing this statewide crisis, and we stand ready to work with you to move the state forward.

Sincerely,



Mayor Jeffery Schielke, City of Batavia
Chair, Council of Mayors Executive Committee



Mayor Leon Rockingham, City of North Chicago
Vice Chair, Council of Mayors Executive Committee



Mayor Eugene Williams, Village of Lynwood
Vice Chair, Council of Mayors Executive Committee

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