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Congresswoman Matsui Introduces Safe and Complete Streets Legislation

Policies Would Create Safer Roads for Bicyclists, Pedestrians, Seniors, Schoolchildren and Motorists

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-CA) introduced the Safe and Complete Streets Act of 2011, legislation that would require each state's department of transportation and metropolitan planning organization to put in place a Complete Streets policy that ensures all Federally-funded transportation projects accommodate the safety and convenience of all users.

Complete Streets policies ensures roadways are built with all users in mind - including bicyclists, public transportation vehicles and riders, motorists, freight vehicles, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. This bipartisan legislation is cosponsored by Congressman Steven LaTourette (R-OH).

"Complete Streets policies are a win-win for local communities: they save lives and create forward-looking projects that provide lasting value," Matsui said. "I have seen firsthand the interest in Complete Streets on the local level, and a Federal Complete Streets standard will ensure a consistent approach for all of our transportation investments."

"I'm happy to lend my support to the Safe and Complete Streets Act, which helps ensure the safety of all those using our roadways," LaTourette said.

"We are so pleased to have Congressional champions who are committed to creating safer streets," said Barbara McCann, Executive Director of the National

Complete Streets Coalition. "Representatives Matsui and LaTourette are being responsive to communities across the country that are adopting state and local Complete Streets policies and want to see a consistent commitment to safety reflected in federal transportation investments as well."

The Urban Land Institute has estimated that carbon emissions from transportation would be 41 percent above today's levels in 2030 if driving is not curbed, and a recent study by the Texas Transportation Institute found that providing more travel options, including public transportation, bicycling and walking, is an important element in reducing traffic congestion. The study concluded that congestion was responsible for an annual \$78 billion loss in fuel during traffic jams in 2007, an increase from \$57.6 billion in 2000.

"Especially at a time when gas prices are putting enormous pressure on the pocketbooks of American consumers, more and more people are looking for alternatives to driving," added Matsui. "However, far too often, our roads are designed with one thing in mind - trying to move vehicle traffic as quickly as possible. The risks of such design are apparent in the number of pedestrian and bicyclist deaths and injuries we see every year, and often discourage more people from considering other transportation methods. By completing our streets, we can open up our roadways to pedestrians and cyclists - helping to ease congestion and providing an alternative to gas powered vehicles. In doing so, we take strides to fight air pollution and global warming and improve our public health and safety."

In 2008 alone, over 5,000 pedestrians and bicyclists died on U.S. roads and more than 120,000 were injured. One study found that designing roads for pedestrian travel by installing raised medians and redesigning sidewalks and intersections reduced pedestrian risk by 28%. That means that seniors walking to the grocery store or church and children walking to school are put at unnecessary risk.

Congresswoman Matsui's home state of California was one of the first states to put a Complete Streets policy in place, and the Sacramento region's Blueprint for growth has been a model for other metropolitan areas. The Blueprint incorporates Complete Streets polices on the local level, and the Safe and Complete Streets Act would do so on a national level.

"Complete Streets polices are designed to ensure streets, intersections and trails are designed to make them easier to use and maximize their safety," said Mike McKeever, Executive Director of the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG.) "This legislation will encourage Americans to live more active and healthy lifestyles, while also providing more travel options, and cutting down on traffic congestion. SACOG applauds Congresswoman Matsui's leadership in helping to implement our region's Blueprint policies on a national level."

"Congresswoman Matsui's Safe and Complete Streets Legislation is right in the wheelhouse of the City of Sacramento's recently approved General Plan," Jerry Way, Director of Transportation, City of Sacramento said. "This proposed legislation will ensure that Complete Streets will be the standard and not the extraordinary."

Terry Preston, Complete Streets Coordinator for WALKSacramento, added, "WALKSacramento applauds Rep. Matsui for her strong leadership in support of Safe and Complete Streets in our communities. The Safe and Complete Streets Act of 2011 will provide needed direction and guidelines for Federally supported road design and construction. Pedestrians are consistently overrepresented in traffic injury and death statistics due to poor road design. Yet, our need for sustainable communities calls on us to support more walking trips to the park, the bus, our childrens' school and elsewhere. We need safer, healthier and more complete streets. WALKSacramento looks forward to working with Rep. Matsui on developing and enacting a Federal transportation measure that will complete our streets and meet the needs of all users regardless of age, race, income or disability. Our roads belong to all of us."