

SAMPLE LETTER

Dear [INSERT NAME OF Conferee, Tribe's Senator, or Tribe's Congressman]:

I am writing to you on behalf of the [INSERT TRIBE NAME] to ask for your assistance in securing support for the attached tribal provisions to be included in the final version of H.R. 4348 to reauthorize surface transportation programs. As you are aware the House – Senate Conference Committee is currently considering this most important matter. Sound infrastructure is critical to a robust economic recovery for all communities. The need is particularly pronounced for many Native communities, due to our relatively small size, and often remote location.

We are not asking you to support one funding formula over another. Like their governmental counterparts at the state and local level, Indian Tribes and Alaska Native communities support various funding formulas based on size, location, and current road miles.

We have joined together with tribes across the nation to support the attached Tribal Consensus Provisions for inclusion in the final conference reported legislation of H.R. 4348. These non-controversial provisions have broad support throughout Indian Country and have bipartisan support in both chambers. The provisions we view as beneficial to tribal transportation were either included in MAP 21 as passed by the Senate, or adopted by voice vote into H.R.7 during the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee markup of that bill.

While several of the changes may seem relatively minor, their adoption by the conference committee will significantly improve tribal transportation infrastructure. These provisions will not only improve some of the most unsafe roads and bridges in the nation, but will also address some of our nation's most entrenched long-term unemployment. Good roads are essential to effective economic development for Native communities.

Some of the issues in our Tribal Consensus Provisions include support for: funding for the Tribal Transportation Program at the level in H.R. 7 at \$465 million over that of \$450 million in MAP 21; including the tribal transit language found in MAP 21 (if transit is included in the final bill); keeping reporting requirement consistent with the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act, a law which governs most Indian programs; including language to ensure that action taken by the Secretary on behalf of tribes is done with the consent of the affected tribe/s; extending the extremely successful self – governance program to the Department of Transportation which was adopted into H.R.7 by voice vote of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee; and continuing the current practice to permit tribes access to competitive grant programs under the Secretary of Transportation.

We trust you share our conviction that these provisions are critical to economic recovery for our communities, and the nation as a whole. We respectfully request that you signal your support by: [INCLUDE ONLY THE RELEVANT BULLET]

- Forwarding the provision – with an expression of your support – to members of the conference committee.
- Proposing these provisions to the conference committee and supporting their inclusion in the final version of the bill if brought up in your meetings.

Thank you for your consideration of this most important matter.

SAMPLE LETTER

Sincerely,

Attachment: Proposed Tribal Consensus provisions for House-Senate Conference on H.R. 4348
Surface Transportation – (or whatever the name we end up with)