

NAM Executive Vice President Jay Timmons Statement
September 22, 2009 Press Call on Surface Transportation Authorization

Like others on this call, the manufacturers are asking that both the Administration and Congress consider this transportation authorization a national priority to be accomplished in the 111th Congress, and not in 2011.

Manufacturers heavily rely on motor carriers to deliver finished products to their customers and we believe the quality of roads and the transportation system is critical to our nation's competitiveness. Transportation is more than just mobility for people and goods – it's also about preserving and growing high wage manufacturing jobs in the transportation materials and equipment supply chain.

We've got two very significant and immediate issues at hand – the future solvency of the Highway Trust Fund and the need to full authorize surface transportation programs that fund highways, roads, bridges and transit systems across the U.S. which as you know, expire next week. Today, the manufacturers are making a strong commitment to work with Congress to address the challenging revenue issues that have made it easier to say "later, not now." And let me be clear, while manufacturers are open to all funding mechanisms, we believe that because these policy decisions directly affect our members, that any request that users pay more must also be accompanied by legislation that achieves program reforms, increases accountability, focuses on national objectives, and makes a commitment that spending will benefit those who make the investment.

Unfortunately, the additional stimulus funding really isn't the answer either. Less than 10 percent of the \$787 billion went to transportation and while we were very happy to see that the recovery effort did include transportation funding to the states, the stimulus package will not carry us through to 2018. It was merely a down payment and in order to reap the benefits of the Recovery Act, we have to continue the investment; otherwise, quite frankly, we are just shortchanging ourselves. As states face unprecedented fiscal challenges that will continue to play out next year, transportation investments at the state level will suffer and to us, that is something we have to keep our eye on because the condition of our transportation network really requires us to do more, and not less.

One thing that shouldn't be overlooked here is an opportunity in Congress to address a critical issue that affects every household in America. Transportation has traditionally been a bipartisan issue and we are hopeful that Congress will maintain that tradition in the coming months. There's going to be extra time granted to get this bill done but Congress must use that time wisely and productively and communicate to the American people the benefits associated with transportation investments. The business community and certainly manufacturers are willing to be part of the solution and we look forward to working with Congress to get the job done.

###