



News Release

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, Jan. 15, 2008

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Response to the report of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission

National Commission Report Shows Federal Transportation Program is Broke – and Broken, Reform Advocates Say

Joint statement by the Smart Growth America, Reconnecting America and the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership

WASHINGTON, DC – The National Surface Transportation Study Commission has provided an invaluable service in marshalling evidence that the federal transportation program is in need of a “new beginning”, leaders of an emerging transportation reform alliance said today.

While agreeing that the depletion of the transportation trust fund in a rapidly growing nation is cause for alarm, the three organizations said that it is premature to call for more than doubling the gas tax before the outlines of that “new beginning” are clear to the American people.

“The system is broke, but it’s also broken,” said Don Chen, executive director of Smart Growth America. “The American people want to be assured that their hard-earned money is building bridges that stand, not merely bridges to nowhere.”

In just the 20 months since the commission began its work, evidence of the degree of dysfunction has been mounting. The Minnesota bridge collapse and failing levees in New Orleans have brought home the need for accountability in maintaining our current infrastructure.

Concerns over oil supplies have become paramount, even as we have begun to recognize the contribution of transportation to global climate change.

Indeed, Americans are increasingly anxious about their oil-and-highway-dependent transportation system, as the campaign’s national survey confirmed last month. In that poll, Americans ranked “dependency on oil” as the number one issue the nation must address, above “jobs and the economy” and the war in Iraq. Fully 92 percent agreed with the statement that gas prices are likely to rise higher and higher in the

coming years, according to the survey conducted by Harris Interactive for the transportation reform alliance.

“We believe that Americans will willingly spend what it takes to fulfill a national vision, just as they have done since the Interstate Highway system was proposed 50 years ago,” said Anne Canby, executive director of the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership. “But they deserve the chance to be heard in the course of a national discussion of that vision. And the commission’s report also should be heard in its call for accountability, and not merely used to rationalize a money grab for those benefiting from the broken status quo.”

The commission’s report can be found on the web at http://www.transportationfortomorrow.org/final_report/

Reconnecting America is a national non-profit organization that is working to integrate transportation systems and the communities they serve, with the goal of generating lasting public and private returns, improving economic and environmental efficiency, and giving consumers more housing and mobility choices. Online at www.reconnectingamerica.org.

Smart Growth America is a nationwide coalition promoting a better way to grow; one that protects farmland and open space, revitalizes neighborhoods; keep housing affordable; and provides transportation options. Online at www.smartgrowthamerica.org.

The Surface Transportation Policy Partnership is a diverse, nationwide coalition working to ensure safer communities and smarter transportation choices that enhance the economy, improve public health, promote social equity and protect the environment. Online at <http://www.transact.org>.

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