

ASSOCIATION OF
INDIANA COUNTIES, INC.,
Indianapolis, IN, April 23, 1997.

Hon. STEVE BUYER,
U.S. House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN BUYER: As the debate moves forward on the reauthorization of federal transportation programs this year, much is being said about the impact on local governments of the Streamlined Transportation Efficiency Program for the 21st Century, or STEP 21 proposal. It is important for you to know that as an association of county officials, the Association of Indiana Counties enthusiastically supports the STEP 21 proposal.

STEP 21 preserves all of the current law's local planning authority and funding guarantees. In as much as STEP 21 would direct more funding to states like Indiana, local governments will be in line for more funding for our much needed road, street and bridge projects. An added bonus of STEP 21's streamlining and flexibility features will be the ability for us to make funding choices that make sense for our counties, not the one size fits all approach of current law.

I appreciate your efforts in working toward passage of the STEP 21 program, finally directing a fair share of transportation funds to our state and its cities, towns and counties.

Sincerely,

BETH O'LAUGHLIN,
Executive Director.

EVANSVILLE URBAN
TRANSPORTATION STUDY,
Evansville, IN, April 25, 1997.

Representative STEVE BUYER,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE BUYER: The Evansville Urban Transportation Study (EUTS) represents the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for southern Indiana. This letter extends the EUTS Policy Committee's support of the STEP 21 legislation, Streamlined Transportation Efficiency Program for the 21st Century, which is being considered by Congress.

The STEP 21 legislation continues to support strong planning through the continuation of support for metropolitan planning organizations. Additionally, STEP 21 will guarantee state and local governments a minimum return of 95 cents on the dollar (rather than the 82 cents Indiana now receives). STEP 21 provides funding formula guarantees to urban areas of 200,000 plus population, and continued agreement with the Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) will allow STEP 21 to benefit the urban areas of less than 200,000 in population. It is important that large and small urban areas continue to be represented through the MPO process.

The EUTS Policy Committee strongly supports the return of more federal funds to local and state uses. STEP 21 provides the people of Indiana with an opportunity to continue their participation in a cooperative planning process and to receive back, in the form of transportation infrastructure, a higher return of the dollars sent to Washington, DC.

Please support the STEP 21 program. The additional revenue would assist Indiana and other donor states in meeting the many challenges it faces in addressing future economic, social and infrastructure needs. I respectfully appreciate your support.

Sincerely,

ROSE M. ZIGENFUS,
Executive Director.

CITY OF LAFAYETTE,
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR,
Lafayette, IN, April 24, 1997.

Hon. ED PEASE,
Cannon House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE PEASE, In this year's reauthorization of federal transportation programs I want you to know of my support for getting a fair share of federal highway funds for Indiana. I believe that the STEP 21 (Streamlined Transportation Efficiency Program for the 21st Century) program is the way to accomplish that goal.

It is important for you to know that the State of Indiana, in partnership with its local governments, support the STEP 21 effort. I appreciate your efforts on behalf of the STEP 21 program which will bring a fairer share of our highway taxes back to Indiana communities.

Sincerely,

DAVE HEATH,
Mayor.

MPO COUNCIL
July 16, 1996.

Congressman PETER J. VISCLOSKEY,
Cannon House Office Bldg.,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN VISCLOSKEY: The Indiana Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Council represents the twelve urbanized areas of the state of Indiana. This letter extends the MPO Council's support of the STEP 21 legislation (Streamlined Transportation Efficiency Program for the 21st Century) which is currently being drafted by a consortium of states nationwide, and considered by Congress.

The STEP 21 legislation continues to support strong planning through the continuation of support for metropolitan planning organizations. Additionally, STEP 21 will guarantee state and local governments a minimum return of 95 cents on the dollar (rather than the 82 cents Indiana now receives). STEP 21 provides funding formula guarantees to urban areas of 200,000 plus population. The MPO Council also represents urban areas of under 200,000 in population. It is important that large and small urban areas continue to be represented through the MPO process.

The Indiana MPO Council strongly supports the return of more federal funds to local and state uses. STEP 21, as described in this letter, provides the people of Indiana with an opportunity to continue their participation in a cooperative planning process and to receive back (in the form of better highways) a higher return of the dollars sent to Washington D.C.

Please support the STEP 21 program as described. The additional revenue would assist Indiana in meeting the many challenges it faces in addressing future economic, social and infrastructure needs. We respectfully appreciate your support.

STEP 21, THE NEXT LOGICAL STEP TO ISTEA IN REFORMING TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. CONDIT] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CONDIT. Mr. Speaker, as our transportation needs change going into the 21st century, our current funding formula dating back to 1916 needs to be updated. H.R. 647, STEP 21, is a commonsense approach to reforming transportation funding that simplifies and

reduces the complex ISTEA program and funding set-aside. STEP 21 is not a substitute bill for ISTEA. It represents the next logical step to ISTEA. Our focus is strictly on highway funding. Our purpose is to create equity among the States. It is time to fix an outdated funding formula. We need to strike a balance between equity and meeting our transportation needs.

STEP 21 ensures a true 95 percent return on States' contributions to the Federal highway trust fund. In California, STEP 21's funding formula would mean an additional \$500 million per year over the life of ISTEA. California deserves a better rate of return. When we factor out emergencies and transit funding, California receives 86 cents on the dollar, and that is wrong. The question is one of equity, and it is time for California to receive her fair share.

The argument is not whether the Federal Government should play a role in administering the highway program, it is how big, how big the Federal role should be. It is time to allow States and local officials the flexibility to solve their own unique set of problems. STEP 21 gives local governments more flexibility without endangering CMAQ or enhancement programs. It allows them to decide how to best spend the money, whether it is in improving the air quality, improving traffic problems, or building more bicycle trails.

It does not change current MPO structures. Under STEP 21, MPO's will continue to receive the same set-aside they receive under ISTEA. It is time for greater equity and more local control. It is time for STEP 21.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to also commend the gentleman from Texas [Mr. DELAY] for his leadership in this area. He has done great work for us. I believe that the country will benefit from us passing STEP 21.

WHY STEP 21 AND ISTEA IS GOOD FOR AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee [Mr. DUNCAN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Mr. Speaker, as a Member from a so-called donor State, I rise in strong support of the STEP 21 program. This program would permit each State to receive a far more equitable return on what is paid into the Federal highway trust fund. My State, Tennessee, has received only 78 cents for every \$1 we have contributed over the last few years. This is not fair, and it is not right. With the passage of STEP 21, each State will be assured of at least a 95 percent return on its contribution to the Federal highway trust fund. Not only will STEP 21 benefit Tennessee, but it will benefit the entire Nation by providing a consistent economic benefit for all States.

In addition, STEP 21 lets the States decide where they want to spend their highway trust fund allocation. Tennesseans do not need Washington to