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April 2, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Schumer,

As you turn your attention towards a Phase IV package in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, I respectfully urge you to include my legislation, H.R.180, the *Build America Act*, as part of the package. I strongly support including a bold investment in infrastructure in the next phase of our response to the coronavirus and believe my proposal would facilitate the types of investments our country needs at this crucial time.

The *Build America Act* proposes removing the Capital Investment Grant program (CIG) and the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Discretionary Grant program from the annual appropriations process and converting them into mandatory programs under the purview of the Department of Transportation (DOT). These programs have been immensely successful in assisting rural and urban communities make new investments in transportation, clean water, and other projects that have a significant local or regional impact. Each program requires matching funds from those seeking funding, making them smart and effective avenues for leveraging federal dollars to have their greatest effect.

As you know, funding opportunities for these programs are highly sought after. In December 2018, for instance, the DOT awarded \$1.5 billion in BUILD funding to 91 projects – a mere fraction of the 851 eligible applications submitted requesting more than \$10.9 billion in assistance. Congress further appropriates approximately \$2.3 billion every year for CIG grants to fund light rail, heavy rail, commuter rail, streetcar, and bus rapid transit projects. Permanently establishing these programs with expanded funding would ensure that cities, counties, and states

across the country would have access to these highly sought-after funds as they continue to address their own pressing infrastructure needs.

My legislation increases funding for BUILD and CIG to \$3 billion annually and \$9 billion annually, respectively, while preserving the underlying statutory structures of each program. By implementing a long-overdue increase to the motor vehicle fuel excise tax, which is projected to increase revenues by more than \$500 billion over ten years, my legislation is able to pay for these increases while simultaneously fully funding the Highway Trust Fund, enabling the DOT to clear its backlog of highway repair projects.

As our nation continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, investments in infrastructure will help to pave the way for economic recovery and future prosperity. I appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to working with you to prioritize infrastructure in the coming legislative package. Should you have any questions about my proposal, please do not hesitate to contact my office. With warm regards, I remain,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alcee L. Hastings". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress