



For immediate release – May 14, 2014

Contact

Veronica Vanterpool
Executive Director, Tri-State Transportation Campaign
212-268-7474

Statement of Tri-State Transportation Campaign Executive Director Veronica Vanterpool on President Obama's visit to the Tappan Zee Bridge:

"The tri-state region desperately needs President Barack Obama's assistance to call attention to what is at stake for transportation infrastructure in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut if Congress does not replenish the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) before August with a sustainable revenue source. The incongruously named fund not only supports highway projects, but bridge and public transit projects as well. With 20 million people living and working in the New York metro region, any halt in transportation funding jeopardizes critical projects that are essential to moving people and commerce throughout the region.

According to Transportation for America's report, *The End of the Road? The Looming Fiscal Disaster for Transportation*, New York, New Jersey and Connecticut collectively stand to lose over \$5 billion in federal highway and transit funding in fiscal year 2015 if Congress doesn't act to add new revenue to the Highway Trust Fund's highway and mass transit accounts. Of this amount, the downstate region's urbanized areas – the corridor stretching from eastern Connecticut to southern New Jersey – stands to lose over \$2 billion.

It has been 25 years since Congress increased the federal fuel tax, which helps fund the HTF, despite the deteriorating state of our nation's transportation infrastructure. The tax generates less revenue every year as people drive less and purchase more fuel efficient cars. As a result, Congress transfers money from the general fund to the Highway Trust Fund each year to ensure roads are paved, bridges are inspected and transit projects are built. It is time for Congress to act and increase the gas tax while exploring other revenue options.

The apathy surrounding transportation investment by our elected leaders helps explain why America trails other countries in transportation innovations like bus rapid transit and high speed rail, continues to be a major contributor to climate change, and suffers from health epidemics like asthma and obesity. President Obama is leading the change and his call for more infrastructure investment is most welcome in our region."

###

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-profit organization working toward a more balanced, transit-friendly and equitable transportation system in Connecticut, New York and New Jersey.