



March 30, 2017

The Honorable Bill Shuster (R-PA)
House Transportation and Infrastructure
Committee, Chair
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter DeFazio (D-OR)
House Transportation and Infrastructure
Committee, Ranking Member
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio,

On behalf of the Association for Commuter Transportation (ACT), I want to thank your bi-partisan leadership taking action on HR 1346, legislation to repeal the rule issued by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration entitled "Metropolitan Planning Organization Coordination and Planning Area Reform". ACT would also like to applaud and thank Congressman Lipinski (D-IL) and the Members of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee for taking action to eliminate this overbearing and unnecessary rule. ACT urges the House to pass this legislation as swiftly as possible.

ACT, representing agencies across the nation who work to provide commuters with options, supports enhanced regional coordination, however, the finalized rule went well beyond the intended scope and would have been detrimental to transportation programs across the county.

Unless action is taken, the finalized rule would radically alter the planning processes, practices and understandings that have been in effect for MPOs for decades. The proposed rule calling for the merging of MPO processes would, in effect, create much larger planning areas; thus, watering down the voice of local elected officials in the regional planning process.

The rule would also create a situation where the very real and legitimate interests of many regions and their constituent sub-regions might be lost in the shuffle of a large "super-regional" planning entity. As well, this proposed rule does nothing to integrate important stakeholders like transportation management associations (TMAs), employers, or other entities into the planning process; and as mentioned before, makes the planning process so 'big' that these stakeholders, who are often already overwhelmed by the process, will be further obfuscated.

Further, the final rule does little to clear up transparency and governance issues. It simply will involve more public bodies who will fight for their share of the pie rather than develop strategic planning documents.

ACT believes in planning transparency and better coordination within and between planning bodies, however, this rule falls short in delivering on either of these principles and would serve as a significant setback. We thank you for your action and look forward to working with you in the 115th Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Straus". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

David Straus
Executive Director

Cc: House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Members