The Honorable John A. Boehner
Speaker
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
H-204 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eric Cantor
Majority Leader
H-329 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny H. Hoyer
Democratic Whip
H-148 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner, Leader Cantor, Leader Pelosi and Whip Hoyer:

As the House prepares to consider important tax and transportation measures in the coming weeks, we urge you to support the quick passage of a budget neutral provision to restore parity between the pre-tax transit and parking benefits. Failure to pass this important provision will result in a policy that rewards drivers and unfairly punishes transit riders.

Beginning January 1, 2012, transit riders who use the transit portion of the commuter benefit had the cost of their commute increase because the transit benefit tax provision expired. Transit riders saw the monthly cap on the transit benefit reduced from $230 per month to $125 per month -- almost a 50 percent drop. Meanwhile, commuters who drive to work and park their cars received an increase in their monthly benefit from $230 per month to $240 per month, due to an automatic cost of living increase. Benefit parity can be established at no cost to the federal government simply by setting the maximum benefit possible for both modes at $200 per month.

If we do not act quickly, millions of transit and vanpool riders will continue to be taxed more than their fellow commuters who drive to work. This inequity will force many commuters out of trains, buses, and vanpools, and back into their cars which will only lead to increases in congestion, fuel consumption, lost productivity and wasted time that could be spent on productive work or with their families.

The transit benefit also provides small businesses and job creators with a financial incentive to help their employees increase their disposable incomes. This is a perfect example of how targeted and effective federal policy can provide employers with an opportunity to help their employees save money on their commute, while saving employers money that can be reinvested into their businesses to create new jobs. Congress should not continue to promote a tax policy that favors drivers over commuters and that penalizes businesses that do the right thing by offering their employees incentives to utilize a variety of transportation options.
We support the swift passage of legislation to permanently establish parity between the transit and parking benefits at a monthly level that will result in no additional costs to the federal government so that working Americans who choose public transportation and vanpools receive fair and equitable relief from the high cost of their commutes.

Sincerely,

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

Michael G. Grimm  
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

Robert Turner  
Member of Congress

Peter T. King  
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress

John Conyers  
Member of Congress

Russ Carnahan  
Member of Congress

Jerry Nadler  
Member of Congress

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress

Edolphus Towns  
Member of Congress

Maurice D. Hinchey  
Member of Congress
Roscoe O. Bartlett
Member of Congress

Howard L. Berman
Member of Congress

James P. Moran
Member of Congress

Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress

Bob Filner
Member of Congress

Leonard L. Boswell
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

Lois Capps
Member of Congress

James A. Himes
Member of Congress

Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress

C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

Rush D. Holt
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David E. Price
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