

Alliance for Biking & Walking * America Walks * American Foundation of the Blind * American Heart Association * American Public Health Association * Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals * Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF) * Gamaliel * Institute for Transportation & Development Policy * League of American Bicyclists * National Association of County and City Health Officials * National Complete Streets Coalition * National Recreation and Parks Association * PolicyLink* Rails to Trails Conservancy * Safe Routes to School National Partnership * Sierra Club * Synergy, LLC * The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) * Transportation Equity Network * Trust for America's Health * U.S. Public Interest Research Group (USPIRG) * United Spinal Association

February 24, 2014

Dear Representative

The undersigned national organizations respectfully ask you to address the increase in demand for bicycling and walking facilities by co-sponsoring *H.R. 3978 New Opportunities for Bicycling and Pedestrian Infrastructure Financing Act of 2014*. This bill creates a new tool for mayors and communities to finance much-needed transportation infrastructure, including in low-income neighborhoods, without adding any spending to the deficit.

This bill, introduced by Representatives Sires (D-NJ), Diaz-Balart (R-FL), Carson (D-IN) and Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL) creates a long-term low-interest loan opportunity for mayors and local governments to build safe and accessible bicycling and pedestrian networks by creating a set aside from the larger TIFIA loan program. The bill also helps to create necessary access to reliable, affordable and safe transportation options to low-income communities by requiring at least 25 percent of funding be spent in low-income communities.

Bicycling and walking are increasingly important modes of transportation, with bike commuting rising 62 percent nationwide between 2000 and 2012. That growth was significantly higher in the largest Bicycle Friendly Communities, those which invest in infrastructure and bicycle friendly policies, rising more than 80 percent over that same timeframe. Safer and more accessible bicycling and walking raises the quality of life, improves health, spurs economic development and draws young professionals into communities. The funding could also be used to achieve compliance with the American with Disabilities Act contributing to the accessibility of streets for the nearly one in five Americans who has a disability and relies on quality transportation infrastructure to contribute and remain active participants in their communities.

The need for better infrastructure is more acute in low-income neighborhoods. Millions of American families lack necessary access to reliable, affordable transportation options. Three-quarters of low- and middle-skilled jobs cannot be accessed by a one-way, 90-minute transit commute. In small towns and rural communities, nearly two-thirds of all residents have limited or no transit options. Employees working evening and early-morning shifts often turn to biking and walking for all or part of their commute out of necessity — without safe infrastructure, these rides can be exceedingly dangerous and reinforce inequality. By improving networks that link low-income neighborhoods with commercial areas, schools and job centers the New Opportunities bill can create inexpensive and safe transportation options for everyone.

I hope you will consider co-sponsoring *HR 3978: New Opportunities for Bicycling and Pedestrian Infrastructure Financing Act of 2014* to give mayors and local governments a new opportunity to build safe and accessible transportation networks in their communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Biking & Walking
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American Foundation for the Blind
American Heart Association
American Public Health Association
Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals
Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund (DREDF)
Gamaliel
Independent Living Center of the Hudson Valley Inc.
Institute for Transportation & Development Policy
League of American Bicyclists
National Alliance of Community Economic Development Associations
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Complete Streets Coalition
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