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December 16, 2008

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Ms. Pelosi:

The economic recovery package under development in the House of Representatives puts our nation at a critical crossroads in terms of infrastructure priorities. The approach to transportation infrastructure spending taken in H.R. 7110 would empower state Departments of Transportation to extend an outmoded single-minded focus on building roads. The better alternative is for Congress to establish a balanced set of transportation investments that will put Americans to work now while also providing affordable, clean and healthy transportation options for our future.

Building rail-trails and other bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure creates as many or more jobs per dollar as does constructing other transportation projects. These are green jobs that directly support Main Street with decisions made close to home and employment opportunities for a wide range of small contractors. Further, these projects tend to be more labor intensive than highway projects that have relatively high material costs and they are easier to ramp up quickly because they are of a manageable scale.

More than 12,000 Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) supporters have thus far signed the following petition requesting funding for trails, walking and biking in the economic recovery package.

I support explicit funding for trails, walking and biking in the upcoming economic recovery package. Funding active transportation is a cost-effective investment that creates jobs and leads to healthier people, stronger communities, decreased oil dependency, and reduced climate change emissions.

This popular outcry reflects a widespread view at the community level that states have often failed to recognize the potential to improve transportation and quality of life by providing safe and convenient ways to walk and bike for short trips. Active transportation systems strengthen public transportation, and together they enable people to forgo the high costs of driving for a wide range of everyday needs. Biking and



walking already account for nearly 10% of all trips. With half the trip destinations in America within a 20-minute bike ride, it is not only realistic but also prudent to make transportation investments that will shift more driving trips to these modes. Modest shifts from driving to bicycling and walking will provide tens of billions of dollars in annual benefits in the form of reduced oil dependence, greenhouse gas emissions, traffic congestion and improved public health.

RTC, working with America Bikes and other allies, has identified \$1.7 billion in ready-to-go bicycle, pedestrian and trail projects that can get underway in a matter of months. This list is not comprehensive, but only a beginning. Unquestionably it shows there are extensive opportunities to put Americans to work at the community level building active transportation systems that will create safe and convenient places to bicycle and walk in cities and towns across the country. Over the past week, RTC has also begun to collect bicycle, pedestrian and trail projects that could be constructed in less than two years, but would require more lead time than those included in the initial list. Already, we have identified an additional 450 projects totaling \$1.165 billion. As our total project list nears \$3 billion-- including many projects that will fill gaps in utilitarian networks in metropolitan areas-- the strategic opportunity to improve mobility and public health while reducing pollution and oil dependence is undeniable.

Please revise the economic recovery package to provide explicit support for bicycle, pedestrian and trail projects.

Sincerely,

Kevin Mills
Vice President of Policy
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy