



CITY OF BILLINGS

THOMAS W. HANEL, MAYOR

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February 13, 2012

The Honorable Senator Max Baucus
U. S. Senate 511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-0001

RE: MAP-21 – Support for Cardin Amendment

Dear Senator Baucus,

The City of Billings prides itself on improving the quality of life of its citizens by providing a variety of transportation choices for motorist and non-motorist alike. We are grateful for your efforts and support for **Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century** (MAP-21) to ensure we can sustain our local transportation system. We are, however, concerned what the current version of the bill might mean for funding non-motorized transportation projects. The bill would affect this funding in three ways:

1. Cause bicycle and pedestrian projects to compete with an increasing number of activities eligible for CMAQ funds. Bicycle and pedestrian facilities may pale in magnitude when compared with road projects, but are critical to citizens who are unable, cannot afford or choose not to drive an automobile. It is difficult for these facilities to compete for the same funds available to highway projects.
2. Allow states to "opt out" of bicycle and pedestrian safety funding. Decisions this important should involve local decisions makers in the transportation planning and development process.
3. Reduce the availability of funds for non-motorized transportation projects with the elimination of funding for Safe Routes to Schools and Recreational Trail Program. Without a dedicated funding source for construction of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, Billings would not enjoy the good system it has today, or the great system it could complete in the future.

The City of Billings is requesting your support of Senator Ben Cardin's amendment to MAP-21 which would address our concerns. This amendment would : 1) eliminate eligibility of road projects from the same funding source available to bicycle and pedestrian project; 2) require states to suballocate funding to MPOs like Billings and to solicit applications from local governments for remaining funds; and 3) increase levels of funding for non-motorized transportation projects currently proposed under MAP-21.

The City, through the Billings Urban Area MPO, recently adopted the 2010 Billings Area Bicycle and Trail Master Plan that expresses our vision for a safe, well- connected system of off-street bicycle trails and on-street bicycle lanes. We have spent almost \$5,000,000 in transportation enhancement funds, supplemented with local contributions, over the last fifteen years creating

*Billings Pride:
City-wide*

much of this system. It is our desire to continue providing the citizens of Billings safe, non-motorized transportation options by completing this system with the support of federal funds. We urge you to support the Cardin amendment to achieve this goal.

Sincerely,

Thomas W. Hanel
Mayor