



November 14, 2017

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran and Vice Chairman Leahy:

On behalf of the American Bus Association (ABA) and the entire intercity bus industry, I write to respectfully request that you fund the Intercity Bus Security Grant Program (IBSGP) for FY2018. Terrorist related incidents involving large commercial vehicles, like the recent tragedy in New York City, continue to threaten our transportation network. A critical component to mitigating this threat for the passenger motorcoach industry is the IBSGP; however, the FY 2018 Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill has not yet been reported out of your Committee. There is still time to properly fund this critical program, and I urge you to act.

The ABA represents the intercity motorcoach industry, a thriving industry providing more than 600 million passenger trips annually, on par with U.S. commercial aviation operations and significantly more than Amtrak. Our members routinely serve our nations most prized treasures such as cities like New York, Boston, and Washington, D.C., and numerous monuments throughout the National Park System. They provide much needed transportation to large scale events such as national political conventions and presidential inaugurations, the Super Bowl, concerts and rallies. They provide school trips to students, move college and professional sports teams to games and tournaments, and provide reliable transportation to everyday commuters heading to and from work. The intercity bus industry, in short, is woven into the fabric of everyday life in this country and a vital part of the national transportation network.

In the wake of the horrific events of September 11, 2001, Congress recognized the need to address security risks threatening the surface transportation network, specifically identifying the intercity bus industry as a vital mode of transportation through establishment of the Intercity Bus Security Grant Program (IBSGP) in the *Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007*. Our world today has not changed much from the initial threats provoking this action. In fact, the threat is even more apparent today. According to the National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin released by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on November 9, 2017, terrorist groups continue to actively promote the use of vehicles for ramming attacks against civilian populations.¹ Numerous incidents have occurred both in this country and abroad. It would be entirely misguided to withhold funding for this program at this juncture, as was done in the House Appropriations Committee mark.

Following the recent vehicle attack in New York City, your colleague, Sen. Cassidy (R-LA), acted by introducing the Vehicular Terrorism Prevention Act (S. 2017). But this is not enough, and our industry calls on you, too, to do your part by supporting funding for the IBSGP. Please consider adequately funding the program for FY18 when negotiating the year-end spending bill with the House. The intercity bus industry must stay prepared in this ever-changing threat environment, and IBSGP funding is critical to meeting this need.

I stand ready to any questions about the intercity bus industry or the IBSGP, and may be reached at (202) 218-7229. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter J. Pantuso". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Peter J. Pantuso
President & CEO

CC: The Honorable John Boozman, Chairman, Subcommittee on Homeland Security
The Honorable Jon Tester, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Homeland Security

¹ Department of Homeland Security (2017, November 9) *National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin*. https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/ntas/alerts/17_1109_NTAS_Bulletin.pdf