



August 30, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221
U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230
U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-222
U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204
U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations and the companies and employees they represent, we wish to thank you for supporting enactment of the \$2 billion Coronavirus Economic Relief for Transportation Services or CERTS program, enacted last December as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of FY 2021. This program provided essential relief to the private motorcoach, school bus and U.S. domestic passenger vessel industries, allowing companies to retain and rehire employees under challenging circumstances. However, the program was oversubscribed with losses of over \$8 billion in 2020, far exceeding the initial funding level. Therefore, we seek your support for including an additional \$6 billion for the CERTS program in the reconciliation package now under discussion.

The motorcoach, school bus and passenger vessel industries were, and continue to be, severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, suffering catastrophic losses, and laying off tens of thousands of workers. These industries did not receive any other form of directed assistance last year and had a lengthy wait before the Treasury Department started distributing the CERTS funding this month. These businesses have tried to hold on these past 17 months and dig out from the financial setbacks of last

year, only now to face additional setbacks due to the spread of the COVID variant. At this point, these industries will likely not see recovery, let alone a “normal” business environment, until at least 2023.

Private motorcoach companies provide critical transportation services across the country, reducing congestion for urban centers while providing reliable and affordable transportation to millions of commuters and intercity travelers; connecting rural and underserved communities to jobs, education and critical services; supporting tourism and providing group travel for myriad organizations; moving the military and their equipment, including the transport of active duty military and National Guard forces to protect the U.S. Capitol and Washington, D.C.; and serving as a vital resource to the emergency response community for natural disasters, including wildfires and hurricanes. Motorcoach operations to and from airports, transit stations, and Amtrak also ensure the national public transportation “network” functions efficiently.

The private school bus industry provides nearly 40% of the nation’s school bus service in 200,000 yellow school buses to 26 million children every day, who rely on the school bus as their primary way to get to and from school in the safest way possible. The industry not only transports children to and from school, but also provides critical delivery of school nutrition, supplies and Wi-Fi to students not able to attend school in-person. It is estimated that 60% of private school bus contractors were not fully paid during school closures due to the pandemic

The U.S. domestic passenger vessel industry moves more than 200 million passengers annually, providing both necessary transportation for commuters as well as recreational transportation in support of the nation’s traditionally robust tourism economy. Most private companies operating passenger vessels lost their entire 2020 season or operated at dramatically reduced levels. Given this loss of revenue and customers in 2020, and the slow pace of return in 2021, many companies are simply hoping to survive until the pandemic comes under sufficient control to give members of the public confidence to return.

Although our industries are grateful for the \$2 billion provided for CERTS, which enabled thousands of companies to retain and rehire employees, the grant program was oversubscribed such that only about 20% of the need will be met. The Treasury Department was forced to prorate the awards, with final grant amounts covering only a fraction of the losses these companies are bearing, which are again on the rise due to the ongoing nature of this pandemic. Our industries cannot survive and maintain our workforce under this load and need additional help.

On behalf of the motorcoach, school bus and vessel industries, and all their employees, we urge you to include an additional \$6 billion in funding for the CERTS program in the reconciliation package.

Sincerely,

Peter Pantuso
President and CEO
American Bus Association
Washington, DC

John A. Costa
International President
Amalgamated Transit Union
Silver Spring, MD

Larry Killingsworth
President and CEO
United Motorcoach Association
Alexandria, VA

Curt Macysyn
Executive Director
National School Transportation Association
Alexandria, VA

John Groundwater
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cc:

All Members of U.S. House of Representatives

All Senators in the U.S. Senate