



American Bus Association™

March 6, 2026

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Collins, Ranking Member Murray, Chair Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

On behalf of the American Bus Association (ABA), we respectfully submit our Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations priorities for your consideration. ABA is the leading trade association representing the motorcoach and group travel industry in the United States, with members that include motorcoach operators, tour companies, travel and tourism organizations, and industry suppliers nationwide.

The motorcoach industry is a vital component of the nation's transportation and tourism systems, providing safe, affordable, and efficient group transportation to millions of Americans each year. Motorcoaches serve a wide range of travel needs, including group tours, charter service, sightseeing, scheduled intercity routes, airport connections, commuter service, and essential rural mobility. In many regions, motorcoaches are the only form of intercity transportation available, connecting urban centers, rural communities, colleges and universities, military installations, national parks, and major events.

Beyond mobility, the motorcoach industry is a major economic contributor and a critical partner in national preparedness. In 2024, motorcoach activity generated \$158 billion in total economic impact, supporting more than 890,000 American jobs nationwide. Motorcoach travel drives visitor spending across the economy, benefiting hotels, restaurants, attractions, retail businesses, and local transportation services in every state. In 2024 alone, motorcoach travelers generated \$69.8 billion in direct spending, traveled 37.6 billion passenger miles across group, charter, sightseeing, and scheduled services, and produced \$27.7 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenue, including nearly \$16 billion for state and local governments. As this spending circulates through local economies, it supports businesses, wages, and public revenues nationwide.

Scheduled service and group travel represent two economic pillars of the industry. Scheduled service—including intercity and airport routes—strengthens national mobility and access, generating \$30 billion in direct spending and a \$68.7 billion total economic impact in 2024 while supporting more than 374,000 jobs and providing essential connections for workers, students,

seniors, and travelers without access to other transportation options. Group travel remains a cornerstone of the industry, producing \$39.8 billion in direct spending and \$89.3 billion in total economic impact, while supporting over 515,000 jobs. Group tours deliver high-value visitors to destinations of all sizes, including small towns and rural communities that depend heavily on tourism dollars.

The priorities listed below for the FY 2027 appropriations process, within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD), and Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) appropriations bills, focus on ensuring fair treatment of private motorcoach operators, strengthening safety and security, improving intermodal connectivity, supporting economic resilience in travel-dependent communities, and ensuring federal policies recognize the value motorcoaches provide to the national transportation system. These targeted appropriations requests are designed to maximize the return on federal investments while supporting safe, efficient, and affordable transportation for communities nationwide.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Callie Hoyt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Callie Hoyt
Senior Vice President, Public Affairs & Government Relations
American Bus Association

ABA FY27 Appropriations Priorities:

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

Transportation Security Administration (TSA) — Surface Transportation Security

Expand Motorcoach Security Grants

Background:

Private motorcoach operators transport hundreds of millions of passengers each year and are a critical component of the nation's surface transportation system. Motorcoaches operate in open, publicly accessible environments, serve major events and tourist destinations, and provide transportation to military bases and urban centers—exposing them to security risks comparable to those faced by other mass transportation modes.

Despite this exposure, private motorcoach operators have limited access to dedicated federal security resources. In FY 2026, DHS provided \$1.8 million for motorcoach security grants—an amount insufficient to address the scale and geographic reach of a nationwide industry composed largely of small and medium-sized businesses. Current funding levels allow only a small number of operators to participate, leaving significant gaps in security coverage.

Motorcoaches also play a vital role in emergency response, evacuations, and disaster recovery, making their security a matter of national preparedness. Increased funding and expanded allowable uses would enable broader deployment of layered security technologies that deter threats, improve situational awareness, and strengthen coordination with law enforcement, directly supporting DHS surface transportation security objectives.

Requested Funding and Report Language (TSA section):

The Committee provides not less than \$5,000,000 for motorcoach security grants under the Transportation Security Administration's Surface Transportation Security programs. The Committee further directs TSA to expand allowable uses of such funds to include onboard security cameras, driver protection barriers, real-time monitoring and communications systems, and other security technologies that enhance passenger and operator safety.

Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD)

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) — Transit Infrastructure and Intermodal Facilities

Guarantee Reasonable Access to Transit and Rail Facilities

Background:

Private intercity motorcoach operators rely on access to publicly funded transit centers and passenger rail facilities to provide seamless intermodal connections. These facilities are often built or modernized using significant federal investment and are intended to serve the traveling public broadly.

In practice, private operators increasingly face inconsistent or restrictive local access policies, including excessive fees, limited hours, or outright denial of access. These barriers reduce mobility options, undermine competition, and limit efficient use of federally funded infrastructure—particularly in rural and underserved areas where motorcoaches may be the only intercity transportation option.

Clear federal guidance and consistent enforcement of reasonable access requirements would protect federal investments, improve intermodal connectivity, and ensure equitable treatment of private operators.

Requested Report Language (FTA section):

The Committee directs the Federal Transit Administration to clarify and enforce existing “reasonable access” requirements applicable to public transit and passenger rail facilities that receive Federal assistance. The Committee expects recipients of Federal transit funds to provide fair, consistent, and nondiscriminatory access to such facilities for private intercity bus and motorcoach operators.

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) — Federal-Aid Highways

Equal Treatment in Congestion Mitigation Programs

Background:

Motorcoaches reduce congestion and emissions by removing dozens of single-occupancy vehicles from the roadway while operating with minimal public subsidy. They provide congestion mitigation benefits comparable to public transit and improve overall system efficiency.

However, private motorcoach operators are often excluded from congestion mitigation programs supported by federal highway funds, including toll relief, managed lanes, and bus-only or high-occupancy vehicle lanes. These exclusions discourage shared mobility and reduce the effectiveness of congestion strategies.

Ensuring equal treatment would maximize the return on federal highway investments, incentivize mode shift, and support federal goals related to congestion reduction and system performance.

Requested Report Language (FHWA section):

The Committee directs the Federal Highway Administration to ensure that States and localities utilizing Federal-aid highway funds provide private motorcoach operators treatment equal to that of public transit providers in congestion mitigation strategies, including tolling relief, managed lanes, and bus-only or high-occupancy vehicle lanes, where applicable.

Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) — Environmental Programs and Management (EPM)

Reasonable Commercial Vehicle Idling Standards

Background:

Motorcoaches must periodically idle to meet essential operational needs, including passenger comfort, safety inspections, accessibility requirements, and climate control during extreme weather. These functions are integral to safe and accessible passenger service.

Widely varying state and local idling ordinances create compliance challenges for interstate operators and can compromise passenger health and safety. Aligning enforcement with existing Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidance would provide consistency while continuing to support Clean Air Act objectives.

A uniform minimum idling standard recognizes operational realities without undermining environmental goals.

Requested Report Language (EPA section):

The Committee directs that any State or locality receiving Federal highway funding adhere to Environmental Protection Agency guidance regarding commercial passenger vehicle idling, including recognition of a minimum 15-minute idling threshold. The Committee encourages consistent enforcement practices that balance passenger safety, accessibility, and operational needs with Clean Air Act objectives.

Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS)

Department of Commerce — International Trade Administration

Eliminate Tariffs on Motorcoaches and Components

Background:

There are no domestic manufacturers of over-the-road motorcoaches in the United States, requiring U.S. transportation providers to rely on imported vehicles from Canada and Europe to meet passenger demand. Motorcoaches are long-lived capital assets, and fleet replacement decisions directly affect safety, accessibility, emissions performance, and operating efficiency. Existing tariffs substantially increase acquisition costs for U.S. operators, delaying fleet modernization and limiting the industry's ability to adopt newer vehicles with advanced safety features, improved accessibility, and lower emissions.

Tariff-related cost increases disproportionately affect small and mid-sized motorcoach operators, many of which operate on thin margins and serve rural, underserved, and tourism-dependent communities. Higher vehicle costs reduce capital investment, constrain service expansion, and ultimately limit transportation options for passengers. These impacts run counter to federal transportation and economic goals related to mobility, sustainability, and access.

Many imported motorcoaches incorporate a significant share of U.S.-origin components and materials supplied by American manufacturers, including engines, transmissions, electronics, safety systems, and interior components. Applying tariffs to the full value of imported vehicles—including U.S.-made content—penalizes domestic suppliers and undermines U.S. manufacturing jobs and supply chains that depend on the motorcoach market.

Targeted tariff relief that excludes the value of U.S.-origin parts and materials from tariff calculations would reduce unnecessary cost burdens on U.S. transportation providers while supporting domestic manufacturing. This approach would help accelerate fleet modernization, improve safety and environmental performance, and align trade policy with broader federal objectives to strengthen U.S. supply chains and support American workers.

Requested Report Language (Commerce section):

The Committee directs the Department of Commerce, in administering trade remedies applicable to imported motorcoaches, to exclude the value of U.S.-origin parts and materials from the total value on which tariffs are assessed.

Department of Commerce — Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA)

Establish a Bus and Group Travel Satellite Account

Background:

The motorcoach and group travel industry generates substantial economic activity nationwide but lacks a dedicated federal data framework comparable to other transportation sectors. This data gap limits policymakers' ability to assess the industry's economic contributions.

A satellite account would provide consistent, authoritative data on employment, output, and tax impacts, supporting evidence-based policymaking and more accurate economic analysis.

Requested Funding and Report Language (BEA section):

The Committee provides \$750,000 for the Bureau of Economic Analysis to establish a Bus and Group Travel Satellite Account and directs BEA to develop and publish data measuring the economic contributions of motorcoach and group travel services.

Economic Development Administration (EDA) — Economic Development Assistance Programs

Fully Fund EDA's Programs at the Authorized Levels

Background:

Group travel is a powerful economic driver in communities across the country, generating visitor spending that supports local businesses, jobs, and public revenues. Motorcoach-based group travel delivers high-volume visitors to destinations of all sizes, including rural communities, small towns, and secondary markets that do not benefit from air service or large-scale convention infrastructure. These visitors support hotels, restaurants, attractions, retail establishments, and local transportation providers, creating economic activity that extends well beyond the transportation sector.

Many communities dependent on group travel are particularly vulnerable to economic disruptions caused by natural disasters, industry downturns, and fluctuations in travel demand. Because group tours often serve as a primary source of off-season and weekday visitation, reductions in group travel can have outsized impacts on employment, small businesses, and municipal revenues. Economic diversification, infrastructure investment, and workforce development are therefore critical to building long-term resilience in these regions.

The Economic Development Administration's core programs provide the primary federal tools available to help such communities respond to these challenges. Communities that rely on group travel depend on EDA's permanent, authorized programs—particularly Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance—to support recovery, infrastructure development, and economic diversification. Public Works investments enable communities to improve transportation access, utilities, and visitor-supporting infrastructure, while Economic Adjustment Assistance provides flexible funding to communities experiencing economic distress, including those impacted by changes in travel patterns.

Although these programs are authorized at increasing levels through FY 2029, annual appropriations have consistently fallen short of authorized amounts, limiting EDA's ability to meet demand and support eligible projects. Fully funding EDA's programs at their authorized levels would strengthen economic resilience, support job creation, and ensure that travel-dependent communities across the country have access to the flexible development tools needed to sustain and grow local economies.

Requested Funding and Report Language (EDA section):

The Committee provides funding at the authorized fiscal year 2027 levels for the Economic Development Administration's assistance programs:

- Public Works: \$220,000,000
- Economic Adjustment Assistance: \$85,000,000

- Planning: \$110,000,000
- Training, Research, and Technical Assistance: \$35,000,000

Report Language:

The Committee recognizes the critical role that travel and tourism play in driving local and regional economic growth, supporting small businesses, and sustaining jobs in communities of all sizes, including rural and underserved areas. The Committee notes that a strong travel and tourism sector depends on coordinated investments in infrastructure, workforce development, transportation access, and destination readiness to remain competitive and resilient.

Accordingly, the Committee encourages EDA to prioritize and expand investments in travel and tourism-related economic development projects, including destination development, visitor infrastructure, workforce training, and intercity and regional ground transportation connectivity that supports group travel and passenger transportation services. The Committee further encourages EDA to work collaboratively with State, regional, and local stakeholders, including private-sector partners, to leverage public and private resources and advance long-term economic resilience while enhancing the visitor experience and strengthening local economies.