

JOE MANCHIN III
WEST VIRGINIA

SUITE 306
HART BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20510
(202) 224-3954

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4804

COMMITTEES
APPROPRIATIONS
ARMED SERVICES
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

December 20, 2019

The Honorable Charles E. Grassley
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Ranking Member
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Wyden:

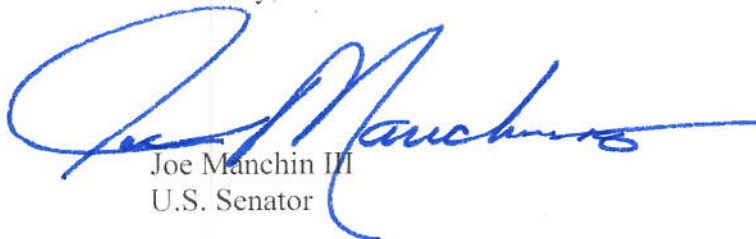
As you draft the revenue title for the transportation reauthorization bill, S. 2302, "America's Transportation Infrastructure Act of 2019," I respectfully urge you to examine ways to modernize the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) and identify consistent and sustainable funding for our nation's infrastructure needs.

My home state of West Virginia is blessed with immense natural beauty that can best be seen along the roads that traverse its steep hills and valleys. But our roads and bridges need significant investments. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, 17% of our bridges have been deemed structurally deficient and 31% of our roads are in poor or mediocre condition. To fix our roads, we first need to fix the HTF. Every year since 2008, Treasury general fund transfers have been required to keep the HTF solvent. That is unsustainable.

I believe we need a comprehensive solution that will provide consistent funding for our nation's infrastructure needs. As you consider options to revitalize the HTF, I ask that you take a holistic view of all revenue and expenditures to ensure they remain relevant today. As an example, the federal excise tax (FET) on trucks and trailers was originally enacted in 1917 to help finance World War I. Today it stands at 12% and represents one of the highest excise taxes that Congress levies on any product. As the tax is tied to the annual sales of the heavy-duty truck market, its revenues can vary greatly from year to year and may even discourage the adoption of cleaner, more fuel efficient, and safer trucks.

With that being said, any changes to the financing of the HTF must be deficit neutral. Since 2008, Congress has transferred \$144 billion from the General Treasury to the HTF. We cannot afford to continue spending in this way. I remain committed to working with you to identify sustainable funding sources that promote the long-term solvency of the HTF.

Sincerely,



Joe Manchin III
U.S. Senator