



February 2, 2026

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen:

On behalf of the American Bus Association (ABA), thank you for your leadership and bipartisan commitment as the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure begins work on the 2026 surface transportation reauthorization. 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. We appreciate the opportunity to share the industry's priorities as Congress undertakes this critical effort to modernize and strengthen the nation's transportation system.

The motorcoach and group travel industry is a vital part of the U.S. transportation and tourism network, 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, national parks, military installations, and major events.

The industry also plays an essential role in national preparedness and resilience, providing transportation for the U.S. military as well as evacuation, relief, and recovery efforts during natural disasters, national emergencies, and other crisis situations.

A Major Economic Contributor

In 2024, motorcoach activity generated \$158 billion in total economic impact, supporting more than 890,000 jobs nationwide. Motorcoach travel drives visitor spending across hotels, restaurants, attractions, retail, and local transportation services in every state. That year alone, motorcoach travelers generated \$69.8 billion in direct spending, traveled 37.6 billion passenger

miles, and produced \$27.7 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenue—nearly \$16 billion of which supported state and local governments.

Scheduled service and group travel are two core pillars of this economic impact. Scheduled service—including intercity and airport routes—generated \$30 billion in direct spending and a \$68.7 billion total economic impact in 2024, supporting more than 374,000 jobs while providing essential mobility for workers, students, seniors, and travelers without access to other modes. Group travel generated \$39.8 billion in direct spending and \$89.3 billion in total economic impact, supporting over 515,000 jobs and delivering high-value visitors to communities large and small, particularly rural destinations that depend on tourism dollars.

A Smart Transportation Investment

Motorcoaches are among the most energy-efficient and environmentally responsible forms of passenger transportation. By moving large numbers of passengers in a single vehicle, motorcoaches reduce congestion, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and decrease fuel consumption on a per-passenger basis compared to personal vehicles and air travel. They provide a scalable, flexible solution for meeting mobility needs in both urban and rural areas while advancing national goals related to sustainability and infrastructure efficiency.

ABA Priorities for the 2026 Surface Transportation Reauthorization

As Congress develops the next surface transportation bill, ABA urges the Committee to recognize and support the essential role of private motorcoach operators by advancing policies that promote fairness, safety, mobility, and economic growth:

Fuel Tax Equity for Private Bus Operators

Congress should restore full fuel tax rebate eligibility for private motorcoach operators that pay into the Highway Trust Fund but receive fewer direct benefits than publicly subsidized modes. Providing fuel tax equity would promote fairness, reduce operating costs, and enable operators to reinvest in service expansion, modern equipment, safety, and workforce development—particularly as fuel remains one of the industry’s largest expenses.

Strengthen the Intercity Bus Program (49 U.S.C. §5311(f))

Congress should strengthen the Intercity Bus Program by increasing funding levels, expanding eligible uses to include terminal access and route development, and supporting both intra- and interstate service. The reauthorization should eliminate the operating subsidy “loss requirement” and include stronger oversight provisions to ensure funds are used exclusively for eligible intercity bus services, improving reliability, connectivity, and accountability in rural and underserved areas.

Guarantee Reasonable Access to Federally Funded Transit and Rail Facilities

Congress should clarify and strengthen statutory “reasonable access” requirements to ensure private intercity motorcoach operators have fair, timely, and consistent access to federally funded transit and passenger rail facilities. Clear federal standards and enforcement mechanisms are needed to prevent inconsistent local practices, improve

intermodal connectivity, and ensure private operators can effectively serve passengers nationwide.

Evaluate Federal Transportation Subsidies Across Modes

Congress should direct the Department of Transportation to conduct a comprehensive, data-driven evaluation of federal transportation subsidies across modes, measuring ridership, cost efficiency, sustainability, and mobility outcomes. This analysis would provide policymakers with a clearer understanding of return on investment and ensure that highly efficient, low-cost modes—such as motorcoaches—are appropriately recognized in national transportation planning and funding decisions.

Maintain Current Motorcoach Insurance Liability Requirements

Congress should maintain existing federal motorcoach insurance liability minimums and require rigorous analysis and public reporting before any future changes are considered. Current requirements already ensure strong passenger protection, and increasing limits without demonstrated safety benefits would impose significant costs on small and mid-sized operators, potentially reducing service in rural and underserved communities.

Ensure Equal Treatment in Congestion Mitigation and Tolling Programs

Congress should ensure private motorcoach operators receive equal treatment in congestion mitigation programs, including tolling relief, managed lanes, and bus-only lanes. Explicit statutory direction is needed to guarantee that privately operated motorcoaches—like publicly operated transit buses—can access these tools, incentivizing shared mobility, reducing congestion, and improving system efficiency.

Enforce Charter Bus Regulations

Congress should strengthen oversight and enforcement of federal charter bus regulations to prevent unfair competition by publicly subsidized transit agencies. The reauthorization should direct the Federal Transit Administration to increase audits, improve transparency, and hold violators accountable, protecting small businesses and preserving a fair and competitive marketplace.

Establish Reasonable Commercial Vehicle Idling Standards

Congress should establish a minimum 15-minute idling threshold for motorcoaches under Clean Air Act enforcement. This standard would reflect real-world operational needs—such as passenger comfort, accessibility requirements, safety checks, and weather conditions—while continuing to support national environmental and emissions-reduction goals.

The motorcoach industry is more than transportation—it is an economic engine, workforce provider, and vital community connector. Policies that strengthen private motorcoach operations support local economies, expand access to affordable transportation, promote tourism and small businesses, create jobs, and improve mobility nationwide.

We appreciate the Committee's leadership as it begins work on the 2026 surface transportation reauthorization and look forward to working with you to ensure the motorcoach industry remains a strong and reliable component of America's transportation system.

Respectfully,

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 of Public Affairs and Government Relations
American Bus Association