

FRIENDS OF AMERICA'S BYWAYS

May 20, 2011

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairman, Environment and Public
Works Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Ranking Member, Environment and
Public Works Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Max Baucus
Chairman, Transportation and
Infrastructure Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable David Vitter
Ranking Member, Transportation and
Infrastructure Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Boxer, Senator Inhofe, Senator Baucus and Senator Vitter:

The National Scenic Byways Program was created by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act in 1991 to celebrate and protect the recreational, cultural, historic and scenic highlights of the nation. It plays a vital role for America's travelers and communities across the country. As national, regional and local organizations that support scenic byways, we urge the Congress to reauthorize the program as a discrete program in the upcoming multi-year surface transportation legislation and to support funding for this valuable program's small but important merit-based grant program to inspire innovation and public-private byways partnerships.

One hundred fifty National Scenic Byways and All-American Roads in 46 states have been designated by the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. These routes offer visitors outstanding, world-class opportunities for scenic, recreational, cultural and historic experiences. Not only are the lives of the American people – and visitors to this country – enriched immensely by these experiences, but thousands of communities have been given a new source of pride and economic vitality. These routes also link America's public lands to communities which serve as gateways to parks, forests, refuges and other federally managed lands, and tell stories about our land's geology, history and wildlife.

Scenic byway grants have funded more than 2,800 projects in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico since the program's inception. Last year, communities in 43 states received almost \$41 million to fund 160 scenic byways projects, including corridor management plans, traveler signs and kiosks, visitor facilities, website and podcast development, historic restoration and much more. The key to the success of these grants is their ability to attract private-sector partners, which benefits both the program itself as well as the local communities. Funding has also been provided for the America's Byways Resource Center, which provides valuable technical assistance to byways managers and stakeholders nationwide, helping them to do a better job in managing and marketing byways while enhancing visitor experiences.

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We respectfully request that the Congress continue the National Scenic Byways Program as a discrete federal program in any new surface transportation legislation. The need for national coordination of this program – and especially better integration of the byways program with FHWA support for roads on federally managed lands – makes the continuation of the byways program in its current form a priority.

Sincerely,

National Friends

AAA

American Bus Association

American Highway Users Alliance

American Motorcyclist Association

American Recreation Coalition

American Road Magazine

American Society of Landscape Architects

ARVC - National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds

Family Motor Coach Association

Good Sam Club

Keep America Beautiful

Motorcycle Industry Council

National Association of Counties

National Association of Development Organizations

National Association of Gateway Communities

National Association of State Park Directors

National Forest Recreation Association

National Park Hospitality Association

National Parks Promotion Council

National Recreation and Park Association

National Scenic Byways Foundation

National Ski Areas Association

National Tour Association

National Trust for Historic Preservation

National Wildlife Federation

Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association

Recreation Vehicle Industry Association

Scenic America

Southeast Tourism Society

United Motorcoach Association

U.S. Travel Association

Western States Tourism Policy Council

Regional and Local Friends

Acadia Parish (LA) Convention & Visitors Commission

Alaska Scenic Byways

Alton (IL) Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau

Arkansas Great River Road

Arrowhead (MN) Regional Development Commission
Big Bend Scenic Byway Corridor Management Entity (FL)
Blackhawk Waterways Convention & Visitors Bureau (IL)
Hon. Keith Cain, Mayor, City of Princeton (IL)
Cameron Parish (LA) Tourist Commission
Campground Owners Association of Montana
Cherokee Nation
Chicago Southland Convention & Visitors Bureau
Chicago's North Shore Convention and Visitors Bureau
Colorado River Headwaters National Scenic Byway (CO)
Creole Nature Trail All-American Road (LA)
Crowley's Ridge Parkway (AR)
DeKalb County (IL) Convention & Visitors Bureau
Flint Hills National Scenic Byway Management Committee (KS)
Gold Belt Tour Scenic and Historic Byway (CO)
Golden Hills Resource Conservation and Development (IA)
Great River Road (IL)
Great Rivers National Scenic Byway (MN)
Great Lakes Seaway Trail (NY)
Heritage Corridor Convention & Visitors Bureau (IL)
Iberia Parish (LA) Convention & Visitors Bureau
Illinois Lincoln Highway Coalition
Illinois River Road National Scenic Byway
Illinois Route 66 Scenic Byway
Hon. John King, Mayor, City of Lewistown (IL)
KRT Productions, Inc. (IL)
Lake Charles/Southwest Louisiana Convention & Visitors Bureau
Lakes to Locks Passage Scenic Byway (NY)
Louisiana Travel Promotion Association
Mohawk Towpath Scenic Byway (NY)
Montana-Wyoming KOA Owners
Mt. Hood Scenic Byway (OR)
National Road Association of Illinois
Nauvoo Nature Trail (IL)
Northern Illinois Tourism Development Office
Oklahoma Route 66 Association
Peoria Area Convention and Visitors Bureau (IL)
Hon. Robert W. Pritchard, State Representative (Sycamore, IL)
Rock Falls (IL) Tourism
Santa Fe Trail Scenic and Historic Byway (CO)
Scenic Missouri
Scenic Texas, Inc.
Sheyenne River Valley Scenic Byways Association (ND)
SotaVenture (IA), LLC
Strait of Juan de Fuca Highway National Scenic Byway (WA)
Turquoise Trail National Scenic Byway (NM)
Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission (MN)
Zydeco (LA) Cajun Prairie Scenic Byway