



May 21, 2021

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)
House Science, Space, and
Technology Committee, Chair
United States House of Representatives

The Honorable Frank Lucas (R-OK)
House Science, Space, and
and Technology Committee, Ranking Member
United States House of Representatives

Dear Chair Johnson & Ranking Member Lucas,

On behalf of RETRC, I write to express support for the 'Surface Transportation Research and Development Act of 2021' and specifically the continued authorization and expansion of the University Transportation Center (UTC) program. RETRC is pleased to see the thoughtful and serious investment that the Committee has placed on the role of research and the development of innovation and wishes to endorse this important legislation.

RETRC is an organization of entities dedicated to supporting the University Transportation Center (UTC) program. We could not be happier with the emphasis the Committee has chosen to place in investing in the UTC program. Most importantly, we are grateful that the UTC program remains funded through the Highway Trust Fund under this legislation.

The UTC program is where innovation begins. Many of the technology improvements made to our national transportation system began as projects within the UTC program. A reauthorized UTC program will ensure that the research of today becomes the innovation of tomorrow. The UTC program brings together public and private stakeholders to develop and deploy the transportation solutions of tomorrow, making them a reality today.

UTCs also develop the workforce of tomorrow. Half of the transportation workforce is estimated to be on the verge of retirement. In addition, the evolution of our transportation system requires new skills for our leaders and our labor force. The UTCs stand ready to address all these challenges and the increased investment proposed in this legislation is critical.

RETRC whole heartedly and fully embraces and endorses the 'Surface Transportation Research and Development Act of 2021'. We look forward to working with you and your staff as well as the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee to see this language passed into law during the upcoming reauthorization of the FAST-ACT. If you have any questions, please reach out to our advocate, Jason Pavluchuk (Jason@jpavllc.com) or me (m-tooley@tamu.edu).

Respectfully,

Dr. Melissa Tooley
Chairwoman
Research, Education, and Training Reauthorization Coalition (RETRC)