

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

October 4, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Thank you for the leadership and vision you bring to transportation issues in America. Your commitment to addressing past transportation challenges while simultaneously establishing the foundation for a more responsible transportation future is truly appreciated. Please continue to view us as partners in this effort.

We are pleased to support Baltimore City Department of Transportation (BCDOT)'s Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) discretionary grant application. BCDOT seeks to jumpstart Baltimore's efforts to redevelop the "Highway to Nowhere," a 1.39-mile-long vacated highway corridor in between the West Baltimore MARC Station and North Greene Street.

Built in the early 1970s, the Highway to Nowhere is a reminder of racially insensitive 20th century transportation decisions. This segment of Route 40, formerly known as I-170, stems from past efforts to connect Interstate 70 with Downtown Baltimore. Community activism stopped the plan from further damaging the City's urban fabric, but the West Baltimore section of the defunct I-170 was left stranded within Baltimore City, hurting surrounding neighborhoods without adding value to the region's transportation system.

Backed by Federal-Aid Highway funding, construction on the Highway to Nowhere resulted in the destruction of 971 homes and 62 businesses. Approximately 1,500 Black residents were displaced, hurting and dividing the communities of several West Baltimore neighborhoods in the process and serving as a stark example of the long history of inequity in the siting of infrastructure. Fifty years later, the Highway to Nowhere remains a physical and symbolic barrier to progress. BCDOT is working to repair the harm done by urban freeway construction, and the RCP grant program will play a critical role in Baltimore City's efforts to dismantle this barrier and revitalize these neighborhoods.

To create opportunity and build stronger cities, we introduced the *Reconnecting Communities Act* to right this wrong and remove harmful infrastructure that separates our communities. The

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legislation we introduced formed the basis of a provision included in the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (i.e., the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) to establish a grant program for this purpose. In other words, the injustice of the Highway to Nowhere in West Baltimore is the genesis of the new Reconnecting Communities grant program.

We believe transportation should be a source of growth and mobility, not division and exclusion. We also believe it is never too late to undo the wrongs of the past if there is a clear and renewed vision for the future.

We sought to empower and reconnect communities to one another with our legislation. We seek to connect those same communities to economic opportunities, more academic possibilities, arts and entertainment, healthy food options, safe and inviting open-space options, and so much more through the RCP Program.

It is our strong belief that BCDOT's application meets the goals and objectives of the RCP Program. Removing the Highway to Nowhere and giving back nearly 600 acres to West Baltimore Communities with complete streets and community-oriented development will reconnect communities that have been divided for over half a century. We urge you to give the BCDOT's application full and fair consideration. Your time and attention are appreciated.

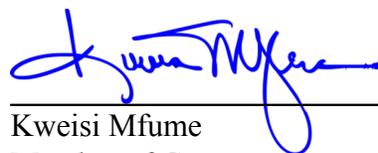
Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



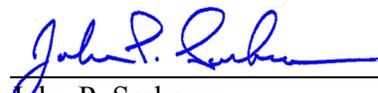
Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress



Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress



C. A. Dutch Ruppertsberger
Member of Congress



John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress

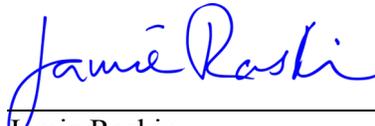
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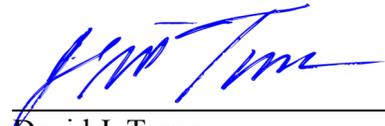
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Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



David J. Trone
Member of Congress