



**CITY OF KIRKLAND**  
**Department of Public Works**  
123 Fifth Avenue, Kirkland, WA 98033 425.587.3800  
[www.ci.kirkland.wa.us](http://www.ci.kirkland.wa.us)

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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Dave Ramsay, City Manager

**From:** Daryl Grigsby, Public Works Director

**Date:** September 24, 2008

**Subject:** Council support of '21<sup>st</sup> Century Transportation for America'

The Washington Public Interest Group (WashPIRG) is requesting cities and other agencies in the state to support its '21<sup>st</sup> Century Transportation for America' agenda. WashPIRG is a consumer advocacy association that seeks to represent consumers in the areas of health care, transportation, media reform and other areas.

The Seattle chapter of WashPIRG submitted a letter to the Mayor which outlines the state of transportation challenges in the country, including fuel costs, global warming, congestion and other issues and seeks the Kirkland City Council to endorse its efforts in federal transportation funding. Its "21<sup>st</sup> Century" campaign proposes a three-point platform to address those issues:

- priority for transit, bus rapid transit and mass transit,
- funding existing roads and bridges, and
- promoting projects that reduce dependence on oil, curb global warming and alleviate congestion.

These three points are consistent with the positions taken by the Kirkland City Council relative to transportation priorities and expenditures. We are recommending the Council support the '21<sup>st</sup> Century Transportation for America' platform. WashPIRG is also requesting support of other cities, including Seattle, Redmond and others.

The U.S. PIRG Education Fund commissioned a report "A Better Way to Go: Meeting America's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transportation Challenges with Modern Public Transit" (March 2008). The report is available online at <http://www.washpirg.org/>.

# WashPIRG

**Standing Up  
To Powerful Interests**

1402 3rd Avenue, Suite 715 | Seattle, WA 98101

www.washpirg.org (206) 568-2854 (ph)  
info@washpirg.org (206) 568-2858 (fx)

**RECEIVED**

September 10, 2008

SEP 11 2008

The Honorable James Lauinger  
123 Fifth Avenue  
Kirkland, WA 98033

CITY OF KIRKLAND  
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

## **"21<sup>st</sup> Century Transportation for America"**

Dear Mayor Lauinger,

I'm writing to ask you to support improvements to the way the federal government funds transportation, and in so doing, better fund your city's and state's transportation needs.

Washingtonians are spending more time than ever stuck in congestion, more money than ever at the pumps, and we are increasingly concerned about our sluggish economy, our dependence on foreign oil, and our aging bridges and overpasses. Clearly, the time is now for intelligent investment that addresses these challenges and gives people more clean and efficient alternatives to driving.

In the Everett-Seattle-Tacoma Metropolitan Area, public transportation saves 24.1 million gallons of oil each year, saves consumers \$63,000,000 in gasoline costs annually, and reduces global warming pollution by 154.3 thousands tons. Nationally, public transportation saves 3.4 billion gallons of oil, prevents 541 million hours of traffic delay and reduces global warming pollution by 26 million tons.

In 2007, you and hundreds of your colleagues showed remarkable vision and leadership by signing The U.S. Conference of Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement, a pledge to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 7 percent below 1990 levels by 2012. This objective cannot be realistically accomplished without addressing the transportation sector, which is responsible for one third of our global warming pollution.

WashPIRG supports a three-point federal transportation reform platform that will enhance our economy, national security, public health, environment, and overall quality of life.

This means:

- Prioritizing new capital funds for light rail, commuter rail, rapid bus service, high-speed intercity rail, and other forms of modern public transportation.
- Dedicating more federal highway money to fixing crumbling roads and bridges, rather than building massive new highway projects.
- Spending taxpayers' money more wisely by focusing transportation dollars on projects that produce real results, such as reducing dependence on oil, curbing global warming pollution, alleviating congestion, and improving public safety.

We are building support for these principles by asking mayors, planning organizations, business interests, and other key constituencies to pledge support. Your endorsement will encourage our Congressional delegation to be advocates for transportation reform.

At the end of 2009, debate will begin on the next federal transportation bill. In the past, this bill has been written behind closed doors with little regard for local interests, and federal transportation funds have prioritized new highway projects and rewarded states and municipalities for high gasoline consumption, more highway lane-miles, and more vehicle miles traveled by car and truck. These formulas effectively punish states with reduced federal funds if they lead the effort to reduce America's dependence on oil and global warming pollution.

We hope you will endorse a simple statement that champions changing the way federal transportation funding is allocated to reflect our principles.

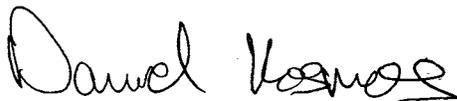
Washington would benefit greatly if federal funding better focused on states that have aging infrastructure and want more public transportation.

Attached you will find our *21<sup>st</sup> Century Transportation for America* principles. We hope you will join your fellow mayors nationwide in a unified call to reform the federal transportation funding system by signing these principles and sending them to:

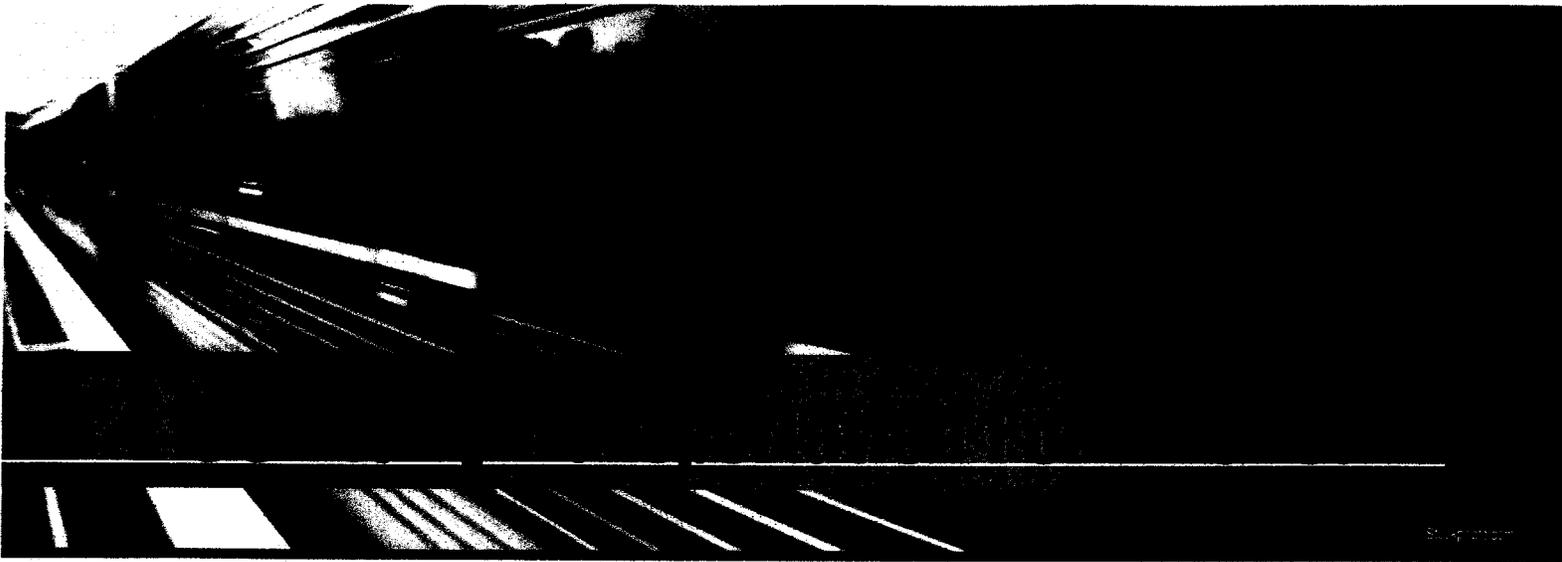
WashPIRG  
1402 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.  
Suite 715  
Seattle, Wa 98101

We look forward to working with you and your staff on this issue.  
If you have questions or comments regarding our work, please feel free to contact me at 206-910-5963. We greatly appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,



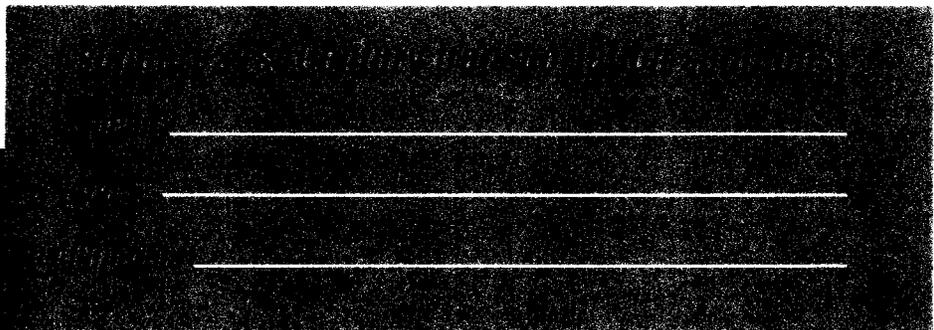
David Kosmos  
WashPIRG  
Program Associate  
[www.washpirg.org](http://www.washpirg.org)



**Advancing Solutions To America's Transportation Problems:** The nation's transportation system is in trouble. America's dependence on cars for transportation is the number one cause of our addiction to oil and a major contributor to global warming and air pollution. Americans waste millions of hours each year on congested roads – many of which are in increasingly poor repair. At the same time, we spend billions of taxpayer dollars each year on wasteful projects that should go to basic maintenance, modernization and investments in better transportation choices.

America must move toward a new transportation future for the 21st century that enhances our economy, national security, public health, environment, and quality of life. To get there, we need a new federal transportation policy that does the following:

- ✓ **Expands clean, efficient transportation choices for Americans** by prioritizing investment of new capital funds for light rail, commuter rail, rapid bus service, high-speed intercity rail and other forms of modern public transportation. At the same time, federal policy should encourage transportation investments that build dynamic and accessible communities, where more Americans can walk, bike or take transit to get where they need to go.
- ✓ **Fixes our crumbling roads and bridges** by investing more federal highway money in maintenance, not massive new highway projects. It's time for the federal government to embrace an approach to highway spending that prioritizes maintaining and modernizing our existing highways over building more.
- ✓ **Spends taxpayers' money more wisely** by focusing transportation dollars on solving our nation's biggest problems. For decades, the federal government has spent billions of dollars on highway projects with little evaluation and no accountability. That must change. Federal transportation money should be spent only on projects that produce real results over the long haul – for example, by reducing our dependence on oil, curbing global warming pollution, alleviating congestion, improving safety, and supporting healthy, sustainable communities.



**DRAFT**

David Kosmos  
Program Associate  
Washington Public Interest Group (WashPIRG)  
1402 3rd Avenue, Suite 715  
Seattle, Washington 98101

Dear Mr. Kosmos:

Thank you for providing the Kirkland City Council with information about WashPIRG's "*21st Century Transportation for America*" initiative. As you may know, the City of Kirkland is coordinating multiple sustainability efforts that align with WashPIRG's three-point federal funding reform platform to expand public transportation opportunities, invest in infrastructure improvements, and focus transportation dollars on solving major problems.

The City of Kirkland actively advocates for non-motorized transportation improvements, transit, mass transit, walking, biking, skinny streets, maintaining the basic road infrastructure and other techniques that promote sustainable mobility. Our pedestrian promotion and safety programs are nationally recognized. In addition, the city has worked with transit agencies and others to fund a Downtown Transit Center, a Freeway Direct Transit Access Project, and a Transit Center at Evergreen Hospital, one of our largest employers. In 2005, the City signed the U.S. Conference of Mayors' Climate Protection Agreement and has adopted greenhouse gas emission reduction targets for the years 2012, 2020 and 2050. The City recognizes that a significant reduction in vehicle miles traveled will be necessary to meet these goals.

The Kirkland City Council is cognizant of the importance of federal transportation funding. The upcoming reauthorization of the U.S. Highway and Transit Bill provides an opportunity for additional non-motorized and transit funding in addition to necessary investments in existing infrastructure. The Kirkland City Council will support these changes in the 2009 legislative agenda.

The Kirkland City Council congratulates WashPIRG on it's "21<sup>st</sup> Century Transportation for America" campaign and supports your agency's commitment to federal transportation funding reform. Please keep the City informed of your efforts by contacting Erin Leonhart, Intergovernmental Relations Manager, at 425-587-3009.

Sincerely,

Kirkland City Council

By James L. Lauinger, Mayor