

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 24, 2019

Senator Richard Shelby
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-128, The Capitol

Senator Patrick Leahy
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-128, The Capitol

Senator Susan Collins
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
S-128, The Capitol

Senator Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing
and Urban Development, and Related
Agencies
S-128, The Capitol

Dear Chairman Shelby, Ranking Member Leahy, Chairman Collins, and Ranking Member Reed,

As Senate appropriators representing states with incomplete corridors of the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS), we are writing to urge you to include dedicated funding for this vital infrastructure project in any final Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act – or final Omnibus Appropriations Act – for Fiscal Year 2020.

The ADHS represents both a crucial infrastructure project for, and a decades-old promise made by the federal government to, one of the most economically disadvantaged regions of the country. First authorized in 1965, the ADHS was designed to better integrate Appalachia with the mid-Atlantic, Midwest, and Southeast regions of the United States, facilitating the movement of goods and people in and through a region challenged by difficult terrain and economic isolation.

The completion of the ADHS is key to the development of Appalachia. Today, 90 percent of the 3,090 ADHS miles authorized have opened to traffic. The remaining ten percent generally represents the most difficult, and therefore expensive, miles to complete, but is essential to facilitating the access of rural communities to interstates and job markets, and the movement of goods between regions and to intermodal terminals across the eastern United States.

Over the past two surface transportation reauthorizations, the ADHS has transitioned from a directly-appropriated program to being an eligible project within the Highway Trust Fund (HWTF). The effects of constrained state budgets and limited growth in HWTF obligation authority have left states with difficult decisions on how to allocate dollars without direct assistance. The result is that the remaining miles of the ADHS are forecast to take decades to

reach completion, if ever, as states generally prioritize transportation investments to more urban areas and accrue unused ADHS obligation authority.

In its most recent economic analysis of the system, the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) finds that the ADHS is already paying dividends: creating or supporting more than 168,000 jobs and generating \$7.3 billion in wage income that would otherwise go unrealized. The ARC estimates that completion of the system will generate an additional \$8.7 billion per year in economic activity, supporting another 46,000 jobs and \$2.7 billion in additional worker income. The benefits of this growth for a historically economically disadvantaged region that over the past decade has lagged the rest of the country in recovering from the financial crisis cannot be understated.

Dedicated appropriations, beyond formula funding from the HWTF and as envisioned in the initial design of the program, are essential to ensuring and accelerating the completion of ADHS corridors. We appreciate your consideration of this request and are eager to assist you in restoring dedicated funding to the ADHS.

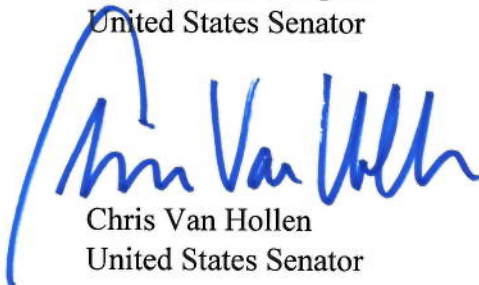
Sincerely,



Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senator



Joe Manchin, III
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator