



CITY OF SAN ANTONIO

JULIÁN CASTRO
MAYOR

February 1, 2010

Senator John Carona, Chairman
Senate Committee on Transportation &
Homeland Security
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711-2068

Representative Joe Pickett, Chairman
House Transportation Committee
Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768-2910

Re: February 1, 2010 Joint Public Hearing

Chairmen Carona and Pickett:

On behalf of the City of San Antonio, I want to thank you and members of your respective committees for your leadership on transportation issues and for the opportunity to present written testimony regarding the funding needs and potential legislative solutions for the San Antonio region.

During the past several years, San Antonio has experienced significant population growth as the fastest growing city in Texas and one of the fastest growing cities in America. That growth is accompanied by a substantial need for street and highway improvements to address mobility demands. In recent years, however, the Bexar County/San Antonio MPO has experienced declines in available project funding, primarily due to decreasing levels of current and anticipated federal and state gasoline tax revenues.

This funding shortage negatively impacts our ability to address traffic congestion, air quality, and ultimately the quality of life for our citizens. There has also been a negative economic impact to the local engineering and road construction, business, all of whom have experienced significant job losses.

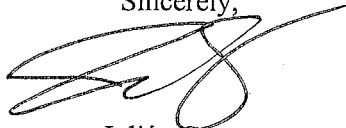
San Antonio's citizens have shown a willingness to provide a substantial local contribution to address transportation needs. In 2004, local voters approved the creation of an Advanced Transportation District (ATD) which levies a quarter-cent sales tax, a portion of which is used to leverage TxDOT projects. At the same time, it is important that federal and state governments find ways to continue historic levels of participation in what are fundamentally state and federal responsibilities.

As Mayor, I encourage the Texas Legislature to consider a variety of funding options, including raising or indexing the State's Motor Fuels Tax; reduction or elimination of diversions of gasoline tax revenue; enabling voters to fund specific projects through local option referendum processes; and capitalizing the Texas Rail Relocation Fund to provide funding for critical rail improvement and relocation projects. San Antonio's goal is to work with your committees and to support your efforts to find real and sustainable solutions to transportation funding needs both in San Antonio and throughout Texas.

With continued rapid population growth expected for Texas over the next two decades, it is imperative that the Senate and House identify appropriate funding solutions to meet these challenges during the upcoming 82nd Legislative session.

Once again, thank you for your leadership and dedication to our State's transportation issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Julian Castro', written in a cursive style.

Julián Castro
MAYOR