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RECONNECTING AMERICA CEO AND PRESIDENT JOHN ROBERT SMITH RELEASES COMMENT ON CONTINUING RESOLUTION

(April 12, 2011) The recently-announced compromise to fund the federal government through the remainder of FY2011 preserves several critical programs, but also raises cause for concern. Reconnecting America is pleased to see that the compromise continues to support the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, which is effectively coordinating federal housing and transportation programs to provide the greatest benefits at the regional and local levels. Programs such as DOT's TIGER grants and HUD's Sustainable Communities grants will save taxpayer dollars over the long-term by helping communities make better investments today.

However, the reduction in the Federal Transit Administration's New Starts/Small Starts program (see link) and the complete elimination of the High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail program in FY 2011 is a step in the wrong direction. In this era of \$4-a-gallon gas, Americans need more transportation options, not fewer. In a report to be released tomorrow, Reconnecting America has found that the pent-up capital demand for fixed guideway transit, whose major federal source of funding is New Starts/Small Starts, is at least \$233 billion and at current levels it would take 73 years to fund the backlog of transit projects being planned by communities all around America.

These programs support communities' efforts to connect people to jobs, to school, to health care. They are creating jobs today, and are helping to build a better future for our children and grandchildren. Reducing support for these programs is short-sighted and ultimately will set us back in our efforts to create stronger and more economically-resilient communities where Americans of all income ranges can afford to live, work, and play.

Reconnecting America's work across the country has demonstrated the transformative power that investing in infrastructure can have on the economy, sustainability, and quality of life in our communities. Continued investment in transportation options is essential to allow our nation to realize its full potential.

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Reconnecting America is a national nonprofit that is helping to transform promising ideas into thriving communities – where transportation choices make it easy to get from place to place, where businesses flourish, and where people from all walks of life can afford to live, work and visit. Reconnecting America is the managing partner of the Center for Transit-Oriented Development, the only national nonprofit effort funded by Congress to promote best practices in transit-oriented development. Reconnecting America is also a founding partner of Transportation for America, a broad coalition of housing, environmental, equal opportunity, public health, urban planning, transportation and other organizations focused on creating a 21st century national transportation program. For more information visit our website, www.reconnectingamerica.org.