

Middle Tennessee Mayors Caucus



NASHVILLE AREA

Metropolitan Planning Organization



March 11, 2014

The Honorable Jim Tracy
Tennessee State Senator
Chairman, Senate Transportation Committee
301 6th Avenue North
Legislative Plaza, Suite 2
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

The Honorable Vince Dean
Tennessee State Representative
Chairman, House Transportation Committee
301 6th Avenue North
War Memorial Building, Suite 107
Nashville, Tennessee 37243

Dear Members of the Senate and House Transportation Committees:

Over the past few weeks, city and county mayors and county executives from across Middle Tennessee have grown increasingly concerned by efforts of transportation committees in both chambers to undermine decades of collaboration between TDOT and local governments in metropolitan areas across the state.

Specifically, on March 5th, the House Transportation Subcommittee adopted an amendment to HB2156 by Rep. Vince Dean (SB2243 – Sen. Tracy) that would prevent Nashville-Davidson County from implementing dedicated-lane bus rapid transit service on state routes without approval by the General Assembly. While implicitly targeting the proposed Amp project planned to connect West and East Nashville, the legislation will have a much broader impact as communities across this region look to improve transit options into and out of Nashville.

More troubling, **mayors and county executives see the legislation as an overreach that reduces our ability to make local decisions.** State and local leaders participate in an extensive, long-standing and federally-mandated project-selection process carried out by Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO). MPOs adopt and maintain a long-range transportation plan and a short-term work program of projects for their respective areas; the latter being formally incorporated into the TDOT-State Transportation Improvement Program. The Amp, along with other key transit projects, are part of that program which includes publicly-vetted priority roadway improvements scheduled for the Nashville area over the next several years, as approved unanimously by the Nashville Area MPO board.

We strongly urge your reconsideration of any legislation that would interfere with TDOT's ability to work with local communities to plan and select projects, particularly those that advance infrastructure improvements aimed at managing congestion and fostering economic growth in metropolitan areas. If there is anything that we can do to help you work through this critical issue, or should you wish to hear more regarding the sentiments of local leadership, please do not hesitate to contact one of us.

Sincerely,

Ken Moore, Chair
Mayors Caucus
City of Franklin Mayor

Kenneth Wilber, Chair
Nashville Area MPO
City of Portland Mayor

Carolyn P. Bowers, Chair
Clarksville Urbanized Area MPO
Montgomery County Mayor

The *Middle Tennessee Mayors Caucus* is comprised of mayors and county executives from across Cheatham, Davidson, Dickson, Maury, Montgomery, Robertson, Rutherford, Sumner, Williamson, and Wilson counties representing nearly 1.8 million Tennesseans.

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**Mayors & County Executives Endorsing Letter re: HB2156/SB2243
as of Noon PM CDT March 12, 2014**

Davidson County

- Karl F. Dean, Metropolitan Nashville-Davidson County
- Harold Spray, City of Berry Hill
- John Coombs, City of Goodlettsville
- William Coke, City of Forest Hills

Cheatham County

- David McCullough, Cheatham County
- Richard Johnson, Town of Ashland City

Maury County

- Jim Bailey, Maury County
- Dean Dickey, City of Columbia

Montgomery County

- Carolyn P. Bowers, Montgomery County
- Kim McMillan, City of Clarksville

Robertson County

- Howard Bradley, Robertson County

Rutherford County

- Ernest Burgess, Rutherford County
- Senna Mosley, City of La Vergne
- Tommy Bragg, City of Murfreesboro

Sumner County

- Anthony Holt, Sumner County
- Jo Ann Graves, City of Gallatin
- Scott Foster, City of Hendersonville
- Kenneth Wilber, City of Portland

Williamson County

- Rogers Anderson, Williamson County
- Betsy Crossley, City of Brentwood
- Ken Moore, City of Franklin
- Rick Graham, City of Spring Hill
- Jimmy Alexander, City of Nolensville
- Corey Napier, Thompson's Station

Wilson County

- Randall Hutto, Wilson County
- Philip Craighead, City of Lebanon