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Montana Transit Association

Max S. Baucus

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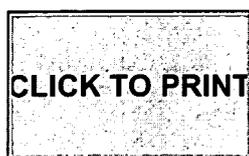
MONTH/YEAR of Records*: **November-2011**

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MT Transit Association Speech

Hello everybody. Max here. I'm sorry I can't be with you today in person, but Senate business has kept me in Washington. I do however want to thank all of you for coming to today's meeting. Your attendance is a testament to the importance of transit in our state.

I'd like to thank Lyn Hellegaard [HILL-A-GUARD] and the staff at the Montana Transit Association for all your hard work in putting this Conference together.

I also thank all of you for the work we've done together over the past year. I commend your determination to find solutions to move Montana's economy forward.

My number one goal is boosting Montana's economy and creating more good-paying jobs in our state. One of the ways we can bring more jobs to Montana is by boosting funds for transit and highways.

As you all know, Congress is in the midst of writing a new six-year transportation bill. We worked well together in 1998. And I'm confident the same will happen this year.

As the top Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, and a senior member of the Environment and Public Works Committee, you can bet I'm back at the table fighting to keep Montana's roads safe and efficient for cars, trucks, vans and buses.

I was one of the authors of the bill in 1998, which brought more than \$1 billion to Montana for transit and highways. That helped maintain 11,000 good-paying jobs in Montana.

This year I'm working to bring more transportation dollars to our state to create more good-paying jobs.

The Senate-passed transportation bill is a good bill for Montana. It uses the formulas that I wrote in the transportation bill that I submitted last year. The Senate-passed transportation bill would provide Montana with more than \$2.2 billion and would help maintain 17,000 good-paying jobs. That is real economic development.

And the transit dollar levels are looking good for Montana. Under the old transportation bill, TEA-21, Montana transit got \$25.2 million. Under the new bill, SAFETEA, Montana transit will receive \$67.7 million.

Overall Montana's funding levels in the Senate transportation bill grow 169% from TEA-21 to SAFETEA.

Montana has the 2nd highest growth of all states under transit. That's the result of our working together.

But we still have a lot of work to do. The House passed their version of the transportation bill at the end of last week. The House bill has lower numbers for Montana for both transit and highways.

In the House-passed transportation bill Montana's transit system is slated to receive \$56 million – that's \$12 million less than the Senate bill.

It's clear the Senate bill is a better choice for Montana as it would triple the current Montana transit funding levels.

Also importantly, the Senate bill will not add one cent to the national debt. Working together with my good friend and colleague Chuck Grassley, chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, we developed a financing plan that protects and boosts both transit and highway funding without raising taxes or adding to the national debt.

As I said before, Chairman Grassley and I came up with a financing plan to fully-fund the Senate-passed transportation bill. In my mind, there's no reason to have a bill any other way.

Although we have an uphill battle against us, you can bet that I'll be at the table fighting for Montana as the bill moves to conference committee.

I'm committed to doing all I can, working together with Denny and Conrad to bring even more transportation dollars to our state. And I look forward to our continued work together.

Good luck with today's meetings. Get some good work done. I look forward to seeing you soon!

All the best.