



MORTGAGE BANKERS ASSOCIATION

June 8, 2021

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
Committee on Transportation &
Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
2134 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation &
Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
1135 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves:

On behalf of the Mortgage Bankers Association¹(MBA), I am writing to express our views regarding specific provisions of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's markup of the *INVEST in America Act*, scheduled for June 9, 2021.

Section 2702: Property disposition for affordable housing

MBA supports the inclusion of language from the *Promote Affordable Housing Near Transit Act*, as introduced by Rep. Adam Smith (D-WA), which would make it possible for local and regional transit agencies to play a role in solving the affordable housing crisis being experienced by so many communities. This provision would create a process for non-governmental entities with a satisfactory track record of developing affordable housing to receive a land transfer from a federal transit grant recipient at zero cost. Beneficiaries of donated land must agree to set aside 40 percent of total units as affordable for thirty years to households with incomes at or below 60 percent of area median income. The Department of Transportation will provide oversight, ensuring that participants only build housing that meets program requirements on land donated under the program.

Section 2703: Affordable housing incentives in Capital Investment Grants

MBA supports the inclusion of language from the *Build More Housing Near Transit Act*, as introduced by Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA) and Reps. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA), Marilyn Strickland (D-WA), Derek Kilmer (D-WA), Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE), David Scott (D-GA), Ami Bera (D-CA), Alan Lowenthal (D-CA), and Tom Suozzi (D-NY), which would maximize federal investment in fixed-guideway transit by ensuring the Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

¹ The Mortgage Bankers Association (MBA) is the national association representing the real estate finance industry, an industry that employs more than 330,000 people in virtually every community in the country. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., the association works to ensure the continued strength of the nation's residential and commercial real estate markets, to expand homeownership, and to extend access to affordable housing to all Americans. MBA promotes fair and ethical lending practices and fosters professional excellence among real estate finance employees through a wide range of educational programs and a variety of publications. Its membership of over 1,700 companies includes all elements of real estate finance: independent mortgage banks, mortgage brokers, commercial banks, thrifts, REITs, Wall Street conduits, life insurance companies, credit unions, and others in the mortgage lending field. For additional information, visit MBA's website: www.mba.org.

takes a holistic and quantitative approach to evaluating the potential for affordable and market-rate housing development near transit alignments and station areas. By making some minor but essential enhancements to the evaluation criteria for the FTA's Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grants Program (Section 5309 grants), this provision has the potential to positively impact the availability of housing in transit-served locations across the country. While real estate and economic development potential is currently part of the Section 5309 grant evaluation process, each factor is considered individually rather than holistically. This proposal will ensure that projects ripe for affordable housing development are given additional scrutiny.

Conclusion

Thank you in advance for your consideration of the views expressed within this letter. We stand ready to work with all Members of the Committee as discussions regarding housing as a part of the debate on infrastructure continue to advance in the House.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Killmer", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bill Killmer
Senior Vice President
Legislative and Political Affairs

cc: All Members, Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure