

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 22, 2022

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Thank you for your ongoing work to implement the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and for the U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT) efforts to revitalize U.S. infrastructure. The IIJA will build on this Administration's efforts to modernize existing transportation systems, while also creating sustainable systems that will serve our Nation for decades. As the DOT continues to implement the law's investments, we ask you to ensure that any infrastructure investments work to make travel accessible for everyone, especially older adults and people with disabilities, by assuring that all new start construction projects are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Rehabilitation Act. We also ask every employer issued IIJA funds commit to the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs' goal of employing at least 7 percent of their workforce with people who have disabilities and that every contract, grant and cooperative agreement include a provision that recipients shall consult with local disability stakeholders to ensure projects result in accessible facilities.

As DOT prepares to distribute \$1 trillion to communities to make our infrastructure more efficient, greener and safer, we can also ensure that facilities and transportation systems are built and renovated to serve everyone, including the 61 million Americans with disabilities.¹ The significant investments in IIJA present an ideal opportunity to make our transit systems, which have historically excluded older adults and people with disabilities, compliant with the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act. New roadways and sidewalks can be constructed in ways that are safe for older adults, who make up 20 percent of all pedestrian deaths.² New transit stations and airports can be constructed and retrofitted in compliance with the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act. While the IIJA committed some dedicated funding for accessibility through programs such as the All Stations Accessibility Program, the broader spirit of inclusive construction should be incorporated into the Department's implementation procedures.

This historic investment in the country's infrastructure is also a historic opportunity to make our physical infrastructure accessible to people with disabilities and to increase the hiring, promotion and retention of people with disabilities in the infrastructure workforce. As notices of funding opportunities, contracts and grants related to IIJA are being prepared and disseminated, we ask:

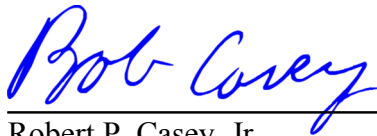
¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "CDC: 1 in 4 US adults live with a disability". (August 16, 2018). <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2018/p0816-disability.html>.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Pedestrian Safety". (2017). https://www.cdc.gov/transportationsafety/pedestrian_safety/index.html.

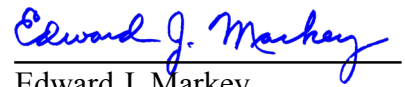
- That every notice of funding include a provision that applicants assure they will follow the requirements in the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act;
- That every contract, grant and cooperative agreement distributing IIJA funds include an assurance that recipients will comply with the requirements of the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act;
- That every employer issued IIJA funds commit to the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs goal of employing at least 7 percent of their workforce; and
- That every contract, grant and cooperative agreement include a provision that recipients shall consult with local disability stakeholders to ensure projects result in accessible facilities.

The work of rebuilding our roads, bridges, rails and airports as well as expanding green technology is long overdue. We applaud the Administration's undertaking of this momentous task. The inclusion of older adults and people with disabilities in the planning and implementation of this once-in-a-generation investment will ensure that all Americans benefit from this investment. Thank you for your attention to our requests. Please respond by May 16th. If you have questions, please contact Michael Gamel-McCormick (michael_gamel-mccormick@aging.senate.gov) in Chairman Casey's office.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator
Chairman, Special Committee
on Aging



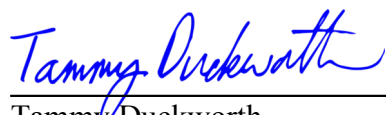
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Tammy Duckworth". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tammy" and last name "Duckworth" clearly legible. The signature is positioned above a horizontal line.

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator