



The Florida Metropolitan Planning Organization Advisory Council

Mayor Richard J. Kaplan
Chairman

November 13, 2003

The Honorable Jeb Bush, Governor
State of Florida
The Capitol
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Governor Bush:

As preparations for the upcoming 2004 Legislative Session begin, you will be faced with a variety of pressing issues. However, we believe transportation makes everything else possible. Our quality of life, our children's future, the traveling safety of our elderly, and the success of our state's economy is literally "riding" on Florida's transportation system. That's why we strongly encourage you to prevent another multi-million dollar "diversion" from the Transportation Trust Fund and ask you to fully fund transportation in your proposed 2004-50 budget.

Earlier this year \$200 million was "redirected, raided, diverted or swept" from the State Transportation Trust Fund. These funds did not come from general revenue, but were collected from transportation user fees: gasoline taxes and tag fees. They are taxes paid by the traveling public in Florida for a very specific purpose – transportation maintenance and improvement. To use them for any other purpose is simply not the way to achieve a safe and efficient transportation system.

Our state is blessed with a unique location and is poised to take advantage of the emerging markets of Central and South American in the 21st Century. But, as Ohio Governor Bob Taft said earlier this year when he proposed increasing transportation spending in his state, "a good location without good access is a prescription for decline." The same is true of Florida.

We also ask that last year's \$200 million diversion be returned to the Trust Fund to meet ever growing transportation needs of our State and metropolitan areas. These diversions can only jeopardize our ability to receive a 95% rate of return from the Federal Highway Trust Fund as supported by all Floridians.

Florida's future is at a transportation crossroads. One road leads to prosperity, freedom, and a better tomorrow. The other leads to greater traffic congestion, economic decline, and the kind of problems we see in other states today.

Please do not propose another Transportation Trust Fund "raid," but instead fully fund transportation in your 2004 budget proposal.

Sincerely,

Mayor Richard J. Kaplan
MPOAC Chairman

RKG/hj

cc: MPOAC Members
Doug Callaway, FBT

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