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April 13, 2026

Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Energy

**Re: H.944 – Transportation Alternatives Grant Program Amendments**

Dear Chair Watson and Members of the Committee,

Local Motion strongly supports the continued prioritization of bicycle and pedestrian projects under the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) program - one of Vermont's most important tools for advancing safe, accessible, and community-scale transportation investments. In particular, TAP-funded projects have been essential in expanding bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, improving safety for vulnerable road users, and supporting local efforts to create more connected, walkable, and economically vibrant communities.

**Priority for Bicycle and Pedestrian Projects**

We urge the Committee to support the House-passed bill's direction regarding program priorities.

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is, at its core, the federal government's primary funding source dedicated to bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and Safe Routes to School initiatives. We recommend that the Committee retain the House language, **consistent with the recommendations of VTrans and the Transportation for Vermonters (T4VT) Coalition**, which preserves the longstanding preferential weighting for bicycle and pedestrian projects as the program's primary intended use, while still allowing flexibility to fund other eligible projects, such as salt sheds and other environmental mitigation projects.

While the House considered and passed recommended language from Transportation for Vermonters and VTrans to amend the percentage of funds distributed, there were no requests to remove the preferential weighting for bicycle and pedestrian projects.

**Urgent Needs in our Communities**

Walking, biking, and rolling provide numerous benefits that improve public health, environmental outcomes, economic vitality, and overall quality of life. These modes of transportation reduce air pollution, improve air quality, and cut greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

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**Making it safe, accessible, and fun for everyone to bike, walk, and roll in Vermont.**

Critically, it is important to recognize that - regardless of whether safe infrastructure is built and maintained - Vermonters are already walking, biking, and rolling on their local roads. For some, this is a necessity due to age, disability, or the cost of driving; for others, it is a choice for recreation or daily travel.

In 2025, at least 164 people were injured on Vermont roads while walking and biking, including 10 people who were killed. This is not acceptable and underscores the urgent need to fund safer, more accessible infrastructure.

TAP funds support essential infrastructure such as sidewalks, crosswalks, traffic calming measures, safer intersections near schools, and ADA-accessible facilities. These investments strengthen mobility in Vermont's small towns and villages. This year, for example, TAP funding will support bicycle and pedestrian projects in Bethel, Chester, Jericho, Shelburne, Swanton, Waitsfield, East Montpelier, and Westmore - while still supporting salt sheds and other environmental mitigation projects in 10 additional communities.

Without clear prioritization for bicycle and pedestrian projects, there is a risk that TAP funds will drift toward less mobility-focused projects, undermining Vermont's ability to meet urgent safety, climate, and active transportation goals.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marcie Gallagher

**Local Motion**

Burlington, Vermont

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