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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

COMMITTEES:
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The Honorable John Olver
Chairman
House Transportation, Housing and
Urban Development, and Related Agencies
Appropriations Subcommittee
2358-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
June 22, 2010

Re: Charlotte Area Transit System Blue Line Light Rail Extension - NE Corridor

Dear Chairman Olver,

On behalf of the City of Charlotte, NC, I am writing to express my support for the Charlotte Area Transit System Blue Line Light Rail Extension - Northeast Corridor project. Due to the volume of requests I received for FY2011, I held all of my non-Defense/Military Construction requests to no more than \$2.5 million, hence the reason I submitted the project as a \$2.5 million New Starts request in the Transportation/HUD Appropriations bill. However, this project needs to be funded at the full \$40 million request that was submitted by my colleague, Congressman Mel Watt, due to the significant impact the project will have on the greater Charlotte-Mecklenburg area.

The Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) is continuing to implement its 2030 Transit Corridor System Plan to develop primary transportation corridors, linking the area's key centers of economic activity. The Transit Corridor System Plan supports development of pedestrian-friendly urban neighbors with a mixture of land uses, offers people a choice in meeting their mobility needs, increases transit's share of the local travel market, reduces Charlotte's dependence on overloaded and gridlocked roads, eases future air and noise pollution, and enhances the overall quality of life in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area. When completed, the Transit System will serve more than two to three times as many transit riders as the present system. The corridors will function as an integrated system, providing connectivity with surrounding communities and institutions.

The Blue Line Extension Light Rail Project, one of Charlotte's five rapid transit corridors, extends 11 miles from Center City Charlotte through the North Davidson Street and University City areas to I-485 northeast of UNC-Charlotte Campus. The project is currently in preliminary engineering and has a placeholder cost estimate of \$1.18 billion. The dual track system will be considered an extension of the LYNX Blue Line (South Corridor) with 13 proposed stations. Through FY2011, CATS anticipates completing 65% preliminary engineering and receiving a

Record of Decision (ROD) and approval from the Federal Transit Administration to enter into the final design phase of the project. Following the ROD, the project can begin procurement of right-of-way.

The \$40 million request which Congressman Watt submitted to your Subcommittee comprises 60 percent of the total cost of preliminary engineering. The remaining 40 percent will be provided from State matching funds and the Mecklenburg County 1/2-cent Sales and Use Tax for Transit.

Public transit is a significant component of the Charlotte metropolitan area's economic vitality as it stands to serve the citizens of my Congressional District by transporting them to and from work, school and other destinations in a safe and cost efficient manner. As such, I appreciate the support you have shown the project over the last three fiscal years and urge you to continue that support for fiscal year 2011 by including a \$40 million appropriation for the City of Charlotte's Charlotte Area Transit System Blue Line Light Rail Extension - Northeast Corridor project in the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Kissell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Larry Kissell
Member of Congress

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