



Congressional Resolution

H.CON.RES. 305

Issue

Bicycling has a significant role to play in meeting our nation's transportation, health, energy, recreation, and environmental goals—and yet it is consistently left out of, or marginalized in, legislation designed to solve these issues. We must elevate discussion of bicycling to the point where it is recognized as being in the national interest to encourage more people to bicycle, and that a national bicycling strategy is necessary to achieve the many benefits that would accrue from increased levels of bicycling.

Background

The recent report of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Commission on the future direction and financing of the nation's transportation system singularly failed to mention bicycling. There were more pictures of ducks and deer than bicyclists in the pages of the final report. Similarly, major energy and climate change legislation passed by Congress in 2007 failed to offer a single program or project to encourage or increase bicycle use.

Despite everything we know about the benefits of bicycling to individuals, communities, and the nation as a whole, across a wide range of critical and pressing policy issues, increased bicycling isn't perceived as a credible solution or a national priority issue. We have to change that perception, especially with reauthorization of the Federal transportation program looming in 2009, and with signature programs such as the National Park Service Centennial Initiative dominating federal land management policies.

In 1994, the US Department of Transportation delivered the milestone National Bicycling and Walking Study to Congress. The report established a national goal of doubling the percentage of trips made by foot and bicycle while simultaneously reducing crashes involving the two modes by ten percent. USDOT created a now-defunct interagency task force to coordinate efforts across Federal agencies. However, no deadline accompanied the goals, and no measurement tools existed then or now to actually measure the ultimate success of the actions. The interagency task force was, perhaps, simply ahead of its time.

Since the report was published, physical inactivity, climate change, sustainability, and energy independence have come to the fore in national and local politics. Congestion, air quality, traffic safety, economic development, recreation and tourism remain critical policy areas in every community and in the nation as a whole. And bicycling has a role to play in all of them.

Benefits

The Congressional Resolution documents more than 20 specific, quantifiable benefits that bicycling brings across a wide spectrum of policy issues. The document creates a compelling case statement for a national strategy to increase bicycling use and safety, and argues for bicycling being substantively included in national, state and local efforts to tackle climate change, obesity, congestion, etc.

A Congressional Resolution establishes a "Sense of Congress" about an issue. As such, a resolution has no immediate costs attached to it, and has no binding outcomes. However, in the build up to significant pieces of legislation, a resolution is an excellent way of promoting an issue, raising awareness of facts and figures about a topic, identifying supporters, and establishing an issue as one of national importance. This latter point is going to be especially critical in the reauthorization process as Congress debates the appropriate Federal role in transportation funding and priorities.

The resolution calls on the United States Congress to adopt a national bicycling strategy to fully realize the incredible benefits of getting more people bicycling, more safely, more often. There is a "sense of Congress" that complete streets policies are essential to ensure wise use of the considerable Federal investment in transportation infrastructure, and that expanded funding for bicycling and walking programs is desirable and appropriate.

Finally, the resolution calls for the re-establishment of an Interagency Task Force to coordinate the efforts of Federal agencies that have a role to play in encouraging more bicycle use. This makes even more sense today than it did 14 years ago.

Status

H.CON.RES. 305, submitted by Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) for himself and Congressman James Oberstar (D-MN) on February 28, has been referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

For More Information

To learn more, contact Walter Finch, advocacy director, League of American Bicyclists, 202-822-1333 or walter@bikeleague.org.



Issue

Complete streets policies simply require that the safety, interests, and convenience of all users including, motorists, pedestrians, transit users, bicyclists, and those who travel with mobility aids are considered in the design and construction of transportation projects. The public right-of-way, our roads, should be designed and built for safe travel by everyone.

Background

Complete Street policies are not new, states such as Virginia, Massachusetts, and California, as well as cities such as Chicago, Seattle, and Salt Lake have successfully adopted complete streets policies. Most say that since accommodation for all users is integrated from the beginning, any additional costs are minimal.

However, many new and improved streets across the country, particularly in developing areas, still do not provide to all users the safe and equitable access to public rights of way. To ensure that we have a comprehensive national complete streets policy, federal action is necessary to require that all states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) adopt complete streets policies that take into account the needs of all road users in all future transportation infrastructure projects.

Benefits

Incomplete streets are barriers to helping people drive less, 50 percent of trips in metro areas are three miles or less and 28 percent of those are less than one mile, yet 65 percent of even these shortest of trips take place in a car, in part because of incomplete streets that make it dangerous or unpleasant to walk, bicycle, or take transit.

- We need to provide for the one-third of Americans who do not drive—many of these people are elderly, or poor, or young—and without walking, biking, or transit, they have no opportunities for mobility.
- Complete streets provide a full menu of transportation options to meet the needs of everyone using the road. Children are able to safely travel to school, those on foot and bike have convenient routes to their destinations, and public transit is accessible by all users.
- Congress has already indicated its support for complete streets. A provision in the recently enacted energy bill states a “sense of Congress” that Complete Streets provisions should be adopted.

Status

Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) introduced S. 2686 on March 3 and we expect companion House legislation to be introduced by Representative Doris Matsui (D-CA) early in the 2nd session of the 110th Congress. Complete streets legislation requires states and MPOs to establish complete streets policies and apply them to federally-funded projects. The legislation also clarifies what a complete streets policy should contain and strengthens research and technical assistance on complete streets. Further information on the standard is available at www.completestreets.org/policies.html.

For More Information

To learn more, contact Walter Finch, advocacy director, League of American Bicyclists, at 202-822-1333 or visit www.completestreets.org.



Issue

The International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) supports the National Park Service (NPS) Centennial Initiative's commitment to restore and repair our nation's parks to their former glory in time for the 2016 100-year anniversary.

Background

IMBA signed a partnership agreement with the NPS in 2005 to improve riding opportunities for the nation's 40 million mountain biking participants by building new trails and opening existing, appropriate dirt trails and roads. More than 40 NPS units are open to mountain biking and IMBA is working with park staff to improve conditions at these and other parks.

In 2007, the National Park Service launched their Centennial Initiative and hosted listening sessions from coast-to-coast. Mountain bikers packed the open houses to volunteer to help and ask for better opportunities for cycling. Not all National Park trails should be open to bicycling, but better access will benefit millions of Americans without compromising natural or historical resources.

Benefits: Bicycling is an NPS Solution

- Parks are better experienced on foot and by bicycle than from inside cars and RVs. Bicycling helps Americans get exercise, connects people with the natural world and it's fun.
- The Centennial initiative stresses the importance of working with the private sector and the bicycle industry and its retail network are a strong ally.
- Visitation numbers are down at many NPS units and improving opportunities for bicycling and promoting trails tourism could benefit economic conditions for nearby communities.
- 200 NPS signature projects have been identified in the first year of the Centennial Initiative, including some that would improve conditions for biking, hiking and equestrian use. Volunteers could help build environmentally-sound, model trails.
- Many parks lack relevance with today's youth – bicycling is a fun way to help kids fall in love with their park and become future stewards.
- Many trails are in disrepair. Mountain bikers are prolific volunteer trail builders and can be a great resource to the NPS. Annually, IMBA members and clubs conduct almost one million hours of trailwork on public lands.

Ask Congress to Support & Fund the NPS Centennial Initiative

Members of Congress can support your state's NPS units by getting behind the NPS Centennial initiative and funding the campaign to restore and protect the natural, cultural and historic resources of the National Parks.

- 1) Urge your member of Congress to co-sponsor HR 3094 or S 1253 the National Park Centennial Challenge Fund Act.
- 2) Urge the House Natural Resources Committee and the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee members to pass HR 3094 and S 1253.
- 3) Urge your Member of Congress to support funding for the Centennial Initiative in the Department of Interior Appropriations bill.



Background

The Congressional Bike Caucus is a bi-partisan organization which was established to advance three primary objectives: promote federal policies that encourage cycling as a valid mode of transportation; improve cycling opportunities for people who commute and cycle to the Hill; and; organize and lead informal recreational rides for Members and staff.

Leadership for the Congressional Bike Caucus is co-chaired by Representatives Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Tom Petri (R-WI) in the House, and Senator Richard Durbin (D-IL) in the Senate.

The Caucus is once again gearing up and looking forward to addressing the challenges America faces in the form of energy security, traffic congestion, global warming, and fighting America's growing obesity epidemic. These issues lend themselves to the promotion of bicycling for both clean and safe transportation alternatives, as well as healthy recreational opportunities.

Working with the Caucus, we have the opportunity to highlight a transportation option that burns calories rather than fossil fuels, requires minimal infrastructure investments, and makes our nation healthier. The federal government can play an important role in promoting cycling's benefits. Please ask your Member to get involved!

The Congressional Bike Caucus is comprised of 177 House members and 16 Senate members as of February 12, 2008. Members are:

Members

HOUSE BIKE CAUCUS

Abercrombie, Neil D-HI
Aderholt, Robert R-AL
Allen, Tom D-ME
Arcuri, Michael D-NY
Baca, Joe D-CA
Bachus, Spencer R-AL
Baird, Brian D-WA
Baldwin, Tammy D-WI
Barrow, John D-GA
Berkley, Shelley D-NV
Bilirakis, Gus R-FL
Blumenauer, Earl (Co-Chair) D-OR
Bono, Mary R-CA
Boozman, John R-AR
Boswell, Leonard D-IA
Boucher, Rick D-VA
Boyda, Nancy D-KS
Braley, Bruce D-IA
Butterfield, GK D-NC
Burgess, Michael R-TX
Cannon, Chris R-UT
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Capuano, Mike D-MA
Cardoza, Dennis D-CA
Carnahan, Russ D-MO
Castle, Michael R-DE
Chandler, Ben D-KY
Clay, William Lacy D-MO
Cooper, Jim D-TN
Costello, Jerry D-FL
Cramer, Bud D-AL
Crowley, Joe D-NY
Cubin, Barbara R-WY
Cummings, Elijah E. D-MD
Davis, Danny K. D-IL
Davis, Jim D-FL
Davis, Lincoln D-TN
Davis, Susan D-CA

Deal, Nathan R-GA
DeFazio, Peter D-OR
Delahunt, Bill D-MA
Diaz-Balart, Lincoln R-FL
Doggett, Lloyd D-TX
Doyle, Mike D-PA
Duncan, John R-TN
Ehlers, Vernon R-MI
Ellison, Keith D-MN
Emanuel, Rahm D-IL
English, Phil R-PA
Eshoo, Anna D-CA
Everett, Terry R-AL
Farr, Sam D-CA
Fattah, Chaka D-PA
Filner, Bob D-CA
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Franks, Trent R-AZ
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Gilchrest, Wayne R-MD
Gillmor, Paul R-OH
Goode, Virgil H., Jr. R-VA
Goodlatte, Bob R-VA
Gordon, Bart D-TN
Grijalva, Raul D-AZ
Gutierrez, Luis V. D-IL
Hall, Ralph R-TX
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Herseth, Stephanie D-SD
Hill, Baron D-IN
Hinchey, Maurice D-NY
Hoekstra, Peter R-MI
Holt, Rush D-NJ
Honda, Mike D-CA
Hooley, Darlene D-OR
Inglis, Bob R-SC
Inslee, Jay D-WA
Israel, Steve J. D-NY
Jackson, Jesse Jr. D-IL
Jackson-Lee, Sheila D-TX
Johnson, Eddie Bernice D-TX

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Johnson, Timothy V. R-IL
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Kagen, Steve D-WI
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Kildee, Dale D-MI
Kilpatrick, Carolyn C. D-MI
Kind, Ron D-WI
Knollenberg, Joe R-MI
Kuhl, John "Randy" R-NY
LaHood, Ray R-IL
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Lewis, Ron R-KY
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Loebbeck, Carolyn D-IA
Lowey, Nita D-NY
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Matsui, Doris D-CA
McCaul, Michael R-TX
McCollum, Betty D-MN
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Woolsey, Lynn D-CA
Wu, David D-OR
Young, Bill R-FL

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