



Bike Delaware

www.bikede.org

A coalition of like minded citizens and organizations that promote bicycling as a healthy alternative to driving and advocate safe provisions within our transportation system.

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

October 31, 2011

Dear Secretary LaHood:

“Bike projects are relatively fast and inexpensive to build and are environmentally sustainable; they reduce travel costs, dramatically improve safety and public health, and reconnect citizens with their communities....”

Delaware heard you.

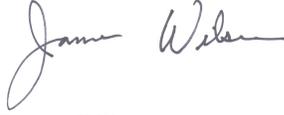
I attended the 2010 National Bike Summit where you stood on a table and addressed the Summit. Governor Markell, as you know, also spoke at the 2010 Summit. He is still the only governor to have ever done so. Fulfilling the promise of his attendance at that Summit, you now have in front of you an application to fund Delaware’s First State Trails and Pathways Initiative. It is one of the most – if not the most – ambitious plans in the country to make an unprecedented *statewide* investment in a comprehensive, interconnected world-class bicycle and pedestrian pathways network. Just as you and Governor Markell together thrilled the National Bike Summit in 2010 with the promise of change, now you have in front of you a concrete plan to turn that promise into reality. We urge you to redeem that promise by helping to match state funding for Governor Markell’s plan from the TIGER III Discretionary Grant Program.

In addition to the arguments you yourself made in 2010 in favor of public investment in bike projects (fast to build, environmentally sustainable, reduce travel costs, improve public health and strengthen communities), I will just mention two other relevant points. The first is that a recent large study¹ that looked at the employment impact of road versus pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure projects in 11 cities found that the latter created about 15% more jobs per dollar spent (presumably because there is less specialized capital equipment used compared to general road projects). So in a time of high unemployment, walking and bicycling projects have a modestly larger impact in terms of employment. The second point is that the size and scope of the commitment that Delaware is proposing may be unprecedented in the country. You have the opportunity to support an initiative that could become a national model for other states, just as the Nonmotorized Transportation Pilot Project communities may (we hope) provide models for communities.

The Delaware General Assembly voted – unanimously - in the spring calling on the state to make direct and strategic investments in walking and bicycling. Our brand new Secretary of Transportation – who used to work for you until just this past spring – recently said that he wants multi-modalism to be one of his two legacies in Delaware. And Governor Markell declared just two weeks ago: “My goal is to make

Delaware walkable and bikeable.” I do not believe that you can find any other state in the country with such focused and enthusiastic partners to create the change you talked about at the 2010 National Bike Summit. *Please seize this opportunity* with both hands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

James Wilson
Executive Director
Bike Delaware

¹ Garrett-Peltier, Heidi, “Pedestrian and Bicycle Infrastructure: A National Study of Employment Impacts”, Political Economy Research Institute.