



April 25, 2011

Governor Rick Scott
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott:

BikeWalkLee, a coalition working to complete Lee County's streets, urges you not to cut funding for programs that support biking and walking as you decide how to distribute the recent congressional rescission of an estimated \$121 million from Florida's federal transportation funds. Last year, there was a similar federal rescission of unobligated balances and Florida took the bulk of the cut from two programs, Transportation Enhancements (TE) (which lost \$25 million) and the Recreational Trails (RTP) program (which lost \$3 million). That meant that the two programs which fund projects to make our roadways safer for walkers and cyclists lost 32%-36% of their funds--almost seven times their fair share.

These cuts were not isolated incidents; rather, they followed a pattern where projects to improve walking and bicycling facilities are marginalized and undervalued by our state government. This is particularly appalling when you consider that Florida leads the nation in unsafe conditions for cyclists and pedestrians, that improving our obesity rates and tourism industry are dependent on creating walkable and bikable roadways, and that biking and walking reduces greenhouse gas emissions and reduces our dependence on foreign oil.

These two programs enable government to do more with less, while enabling citizens to save money through reduced driving and health-care costs, and promoting local businesses and helping draw tourism to our communities. We need more, not less, walking and bicycling opportunities in Lee County and throughout Florida...and here's why:

- 1) Better biking and walking opportunities help attract tourists, new residents and new businesses, by enhancing an area's quality of life, transportation options and recreational infrastructure.
- 2) These projects create jobs -- more workers are employed by bike/walk infrastructure projects than by the same amount spent on motor-transport infrastructure -- and employment opportunities -- by extending the range someone without their own car can routinely travel to a potential workplace.
- 3) These projects can help Floridians improve their health as they lower their dependence on foreign oil for basic transportation needs.

Potential cuts in the TE program will directly affect Lee County's ability to implement its first ever countywide bicycle and pedestrian master plan, set to be adopted by the Lee County Metropolitan Planning Organization on May 20. This groundbreaking plan identifies over \$116 million in priority projects necessary to create a primary bicycle/pedestrian network. Several of these projects are already in the Florida DOT District 1 Work Plan for 2011-12 and could be in jeopardy if these funds are rescinded. This includes three sidewalk projects in Cape Coral and one in Lehigh, budgeted for a total of \$1.8 million in TE funds.

Last year, Lee County—through adoption of complete streets resolutions by both the MPO and the Lee County Board of County Commissioners—embarked on a path to safer streets for everyone. The upcoming countywide

bicycle/pedestrian master plan will provide the blueprint for a safe, accessible, and connected bicycle/pedestrian system. As the county begins to implement its adopted policies, it is critical that its state and federal partners provide our local elected officials with the tools and support they need to continue on the path to a balanced multi-modal transportation system that is vital to the sustainability and economic viability of our community.

We urge you and your administration to minimize the impact of this round of rescissions on critical walking and bicycling programs (TE and RTP), and at the very least, ensure that these programs are not disproportionately affected. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Darla Letourneau

On behalf of

BikeWalkLee

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cc: Senate President Mike Haridopolous
House Speaker Dean Cannon
State Sen. Jack Latvala, chairman, Senate Transportation Committee
State Rep. Mike Horner, chairman, Transportation & Economic Development Appropriations Subcommittee
Ananth Prasad, Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation
Stan Cann, Florida DOT District 1
Lee Legislative Delegation
Lee MPO Members
U.S. Senator Bill Nelson
U.S. Senator Marco Rubio