



National Complete Streets Coalition

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Senator Harkin, Rep. Matsui Introduce Complete Streets Act of 2009

Measure to improve infrastructure spending for better health, safety and environment

Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Representative Doris Matsui (D-CA) have introduced the Complete Streets Act of 2009 into the US Senate and House, to ensure that federal transportation infrastructure investments provide safe travel for Americans whether they are driving, bicycling, walking, or taking public transportation. They were joined by original co-sponsors Sen. Tom Carper, Rep. Ellen Tauscher, Rep. Carolyn Maloney, and Rep. David Wu.

"This legislation keeps one principle in mind: that our transportation system should work for all Americans... and not be focused solely on cars," said Rep. Matsui, of Sacramento, California, which has a local complete streets policy.

"When Americans choose to leave their car at home and walk or ride a bike to school or work, they are making a healthy decision. We need to ensure streets, intersections and trails are designed to make them easier to use and maximize their safety," said Harkin. "This legislation will encourage Americans to be more active, while also providing more travel options and cutting down on traffic congestion."

The Act would require that states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations adopt policies to ensure that future road investments take into account the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders and vehicles, as well as the needs of people of all ages and abilities. The Act is modeled on Complete Streets policies that have been adopted in more than 80 jurisdictions across the United States in the last few years, including California, Illinois, and dozens of cities.

"The Complete Streets Act of 2009 is an important down payment on a renewed vision for transportation that will help communities make their streets safe and inviting for everyone who uses them, whether walking, biking, catching the bus or driving," said James Corless, Campaign Director, Transportation for America. "With more than 80 jurisdictions across the country already moving to adopt such policies, federal investment will help thousands more take the this important step toward creating a transportation network for the 21st century."

The gradual conversion to complete streets will reduce crashes, deaths, and injuries, particularly the almost 5,000 annual fatalities and 70,000 injuries among vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and bicyclists, including older Americans and children. Studies have found that designing for pedestrians by installing raised medians and redesigning intersections and sidewalks reduces pedestrian risk by 28 to 40 percent, and some treatments reduce automobile crashes as well.

AARP • Active Living by Design • Alliance for Biking and Walking • America Bikes • America Walks • American Council of the Blind • American Planning Association • American Public Transportation Association • American Society of Landscape Architects • Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals • City of Boulder • Institute of Transportation Engineers • Kimley-Horn and Associates • League of American Bicyclists • National Center for Bicycling and Walking • Safe Routes to School National Partnership • Smart Growth America

Organizations from the YMCA to the National Association of Realtors have lined up behind the measure, because they see the benefits complete streets will provide on issues ranging from the obesity epidemic to greenhouse gas reduction to providing inexpensive transportation alternatives in tough economic times. [See what they are saying about the bills.](#)

The National Complete Streets Coalition brings together transportation practitioners, transportation system user groups, smart growth and public health advocates, and others who are working for the adoption and implementation of complete streets policies at the local, state, and federal level. For a full listing of Complete Streets Coalition members, see <http://www.completestreets.org/whoweare.html>.

To learn more about the benefits of complete streets, from economic revitalization to safety, visit www.completestreets.org/benefits.html.