



March 18, 2021

The Honorable Janet Yellen
U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20220

RE: Implementation of Coronavirus Economic Relief for Transportation Services (CERTS) Act

Dear Secretary Yellen:

On behalf of the National School Transportation Association (NSTA), I would like to congratulate you on your recent confirmation to lead the U.S. Department of Treasury. We look forward to working with you and the Department on matters of importance to the student transportation sector.

NSTA is the leading resource for school bus transportation solutions and the voice for private contractors for over 55 years. NSTA was formed in 1964 as a membership organization for school bus contract-operators engaged primarily in transporting students to-and-from school and school-related activities. Our members range in size from small family businesses serving one school district, to large corporations operating tens of thousands of buses across multiple states committed to the safe, efficient and economical transportation of our nation's children.

Specifically, I write you today in order to formally ask for your assistance as the Department of Treasury implements the Coronavirus Economic Relief for Transportation Services (CERTS) Act provisions. As you know, this industry specific program was included in the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, signed on December 27, 2020.

Over the past year, our member companies have faced major challenges to the maintenance of the student transportation system, due to state mandated closures of schools. This affected not only revenue from the home-to-school contracts of our members, but additional revenue derived from extra-curricular, sports, field trips and charter activities was also fully eliminated .

As schools continue to reopen, safe, reliable, and efficient pupil transportation will be required, and the CERTS Act will provide the necessary bridge from the Covid-19 affected system to the fully operational system we desperately need to accomplish this goal, especially as we address the payroll and operating costs of providing system continuity. I cannot emphasize enough how important the bridge that CERTS provides is a critical link in the return to school process being developed at the state and national levels.

NSTA has been encouraged in our meetings with the Department of Treasury and Transportation, and we stand ready to provide continuing assistance during this implementation stage. At this stage, we emphasize that as CERTS continues to be developed, it is imperative that the pillars of the program be the efficient and equitable distribution of relief funds. Covid-19 affected all aspects of our industry similarly, and we look forward to the release of these funds as authorized by Congress as soon as possible.

School bus transportation is the safest way to transport a child to and from school – even safer than walking, biking, or riding in a parent or fellow student’s car. In fact, students are seventy times more likely to arrive at school safely when being driven by a school bus, than they would if they were riding in a car.¹ Each day, nearly 26 million children are transported to-and-from school on an estimated 480,000 yellow school buses. Daily, the lives of children on a school bus are entrusted to certified school transportation professionals, who have received special training² and have the experience to ensure the safe transport of children to-and-from school and school related activities.

In closing, we appreciate your consideration of our position on this important matter, and look forward to continuing working in concert with the Department of Treasury. If further clarification is required, please do not hesitate to contact me at 703-684-3200 ext. 700, or by e-mail at cmacysyn@yellowbuses.org.

Sincerely,



Curt Macysyn
Executive Director
National School Transportation Association

¹ U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, “School Bus Safety,” <https://www.nhtsa.gov/road-safety/school-bus-safety>; see also, American School Bus Council, “fact: The School Bus is the Safest Way to Travel to and from School,” <http://schoolbusfacts.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Safety-Benefits.pdf>

² See American School Bus Council “Safety Features of the School Bus,” <http://schoolbusfacts.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/SafetyFeatures.pdf>