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Bill would reward states and localities already investing in public transportation, while also encouraging growing communities to make similar investments

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Washington, DC - Today Congresswoman Doris O. Matsui (CA-05) introduced the Flexibility Incentive Grant Pilot Program (HR 1606), a bill that creates an incentive-based \$250 million annual grant program designed to encourage states and localities to invest in public transportation.

“Because transportation is based on strong partnerships, it is important that we encourage states and localities to invest in public transit. It is equally important for us to reward those localities that are already making a substantial investment in public transportation,” Matsui said.

Dramatic recent increases in ridership indicate that a targeted approach to encouraging state and local investment in public transportation is needed and timely. According to a report released last week by the American Public Transportation Association, Americans took a record-breaking 10.1 billion trips on public transportation in 2006. During the last decade, ridership on public transportation has jumped by 30 percent.

Locally, these ridership numbers have a direct impact on the Sacramento region. The Sacramento Regional Transit’s light rail had the fifth highest ridership gain in the country over the first nine months of 2006, where it increased by ten percent. Nowhere is there more potential for successful federal-local transit partnerships than in Sacramento, and the Flexibility Incentive Grant Program is the first step toward strengthening this collaboration in Sacramento and across the country.

“I am encouraged by the growth in Sacramento-area ridership,” said Matsui. “The methods employed to attract these riders are solid and should be expanded. My intent in introducing this legislation is to provide resources and support for the type of investment Sacramento and other communities across the country are making in their public transportation systems.”

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