

National League of Cities The United States Conference of Mayors

October 2, 2014

Docket Management Facility
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: FTA Docket No. FTA RIN 2132-AB10: Proposal Related to MPO
Representation of Providers of Public Transportation

Dear Sir or Madam:

On behalf of the national organizations representing elected officials of the nation's cities, we are writing to you regarding the representation of public transportation providers on Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs).

In the draft rule, a number of questions were posed to further FTA's review of issues related to provisions in MAP-21 regarding this representation. It is our strong view that Congress intended flexibility in compliance with these provisions, fully cognizant of the variety of MPO governing structures that federal law has embraced and supported for more than a generation. Additionally, the triennial review process provides FTA with a sustainable mechanism for ensuring that MPOs provide sufficient inclusion of transit views. Most importantly, we are certain that local elected officials can fully represent the views and interests of transit providers in performing their duties on the MPO.

Specifically, we do support the provisions in MAP-21 that ensure the views and interests of local transit operators are represented in the planning and other decision-making processes by MPOs. Our organizations have previously communicated to the Department on these issues, most recently in a February 14, 2013 letter to Secretary LaHood.

NLC/USCM Letter
October 2, 2014
Page Two

We continue to strongly believe that local elected officials serving on MPOs already represent the views and interests of transit providers. In many instances, the views and interests of transit providers are represented by local elected officials who serve on the governing boards of both the MPO as well as the transit provider. In others, elected officials on the MPO governing boards represent local jurisdictions as owners and/or operators of transit systems or as part of the governing structure of a transit provider. These representations by local elected officials fully satisfy the amended law.

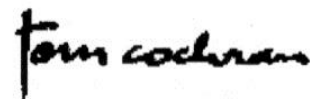
In addition, we also share the view that Congress intended that the MPOs, with their varied governing structures, have flexibility in complying with this representation requirement. If Congress had intended that compliance could only be satisfied with a specific directive, it would have specified so in MAP-21, but it did not. Instead, the language in MAP-21 simply reflects Congress' desire to ensure that all MPOs accounted for the views and interests of transit providers with the expectation that such bodies have the obligation to demonstrate compliance with this language.

Finally, as previously indicated in our earlier letter, we are familiar with the legislative debate on this item, and know the objective of these provisions is to ensure that every MPO is taking account of the views of public transportation providers in planning and project selection decisions. We fully support this objective, and our collective memberships continue to be strong advocates on behalf of public transportation investment and commitment. That said, it is our view that most MPOs already meet the intent of MAP-21 regarding transit representation; the triennial review will appropriately be the mechanism to review and affirm our position with regarding to transit representation on the MPO.

Sincerely,



Clarence Anthony
Executive Director
National League of Cities



Tom Cochran
CEO & Executive Director
The United States
Conference of Mayors