

MEMBER RELEASE

NARC Statement on the FAST Act

“The conference agreement on the *Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act* (FAST) is, at long last, a long-term, well-funded transportation reauthorization that contains important provisions for metropolitan and rural planning organizations and their local elected officials,” said Leslie Wollack, Executive Director of the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC). “We applaud Congress for recognizing the vital role of federal transportation investments for communities of all sizes, and the importance of ensuring that local voices are part of the decision-making process.

“We asked for and received significant additional funding for local transportation priorities. The FAST Act provides an additional \$3.4 billion over the life of the bill for local projects through the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) and increases funding for the Transportation Alternatives Program (which is now a set aside of the STBGP). We also appreciate the growth in funding for the metropolitan planning account.

“The FAST Act also makes significant funding available for locally owned bridges by preserving the off-system bridge set-aside and by making bridges that are not on the National Highway System eligible for funding under the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP).

“We are also pleased that MPOs over 200,000 in population are eligible for funding under the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects program. We will work to ensure that MPOs of all sizes are eligible under this program in future authorizations. We are disappointed that MPOs are not eligible recipients under the National Highway Freight Program given the importation role many MPOs play in facilitation freight movement, though we do appreciate the role MPOs will play in designating urban freight corridors. The Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality program also remains underfunded and the growth in funding in the FAST Act is much slower than the rate of growth in the bill overall.

“Congress is preparing to take an important step to improve the nation’s transportation infrastructure, and we applaud their hard work in getting this legislation across the finish line. The FAST Act contains a number of provisions that are significant for the nation’s regions and their local elected and appointed officials. We are pleased that Congress listened to the many NARC members who reached out on these issues. We also appreciate that many of the issues raised by the Local Officials on Transportation Coalition (LOT) – which consists of NARC, the National Association of Counties, National League of Cities, U.S. Conference of Mayors, Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and National Association of Development Organizations – were resolved in a manner that will help improve and maintain transportation infrastructure at the regional and local levels.”

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