



2015 NATIONAL  
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## LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

**Senators to Introduce Infrastructure Funding Proposal:** Senators Rand Paul (R-KY) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA) announced today they will soon introduce legislation that would reduce the tax rate on repatriated corporate earnings and commit the resulting tax collections to funding transportation projects. To encourage corporations to bring overseas earnings back onshore, the *Invest in Transportation Act* would reduce the tax rate on those earnings from 35 percent to 6.5 percent. That could bring as much as \$2 trillion in earnings back to the U.S. according to Senators Paul and Boxer, and the taxes collected on the repatriated dollars would be committed to infrastructure. The proposal has potential political viability because it does not involve a tax increase, just taxes collected on dollars otherwise parked overseas. There is also significant political opposition to the tax holiday idea, as expressed by Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-UT), whose committee will have final say on how any increase for infrastructure will be funded. A major concern is that this approach increases tax collections in the near term, but would have much higher long-term costs (based on the assumption that those overseas dollars would eventually come home, and at the higher rate). Click [HERE](#) for a white paper on the proposal.

**CBO: Highway Trust Fund Still Broke:** In one of its regular updates to Congress about the state of the nation's economy, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) indicated earlier this week that Congress needs to come up with \$73 billion to pass a five-year reauthorization bill this year to make up the gap between gas tax receipts and expected funding levels. CBO assumes slow growth in the program, from approximately \$54 billion this year to \$60 billion by 2025. The ten-year funding gap is estimated at \$169 billion. These numbers have changed little from last year, but highlight the immense challenge that lies before the Senate Finance and House Ways and Means Committees, which are responsible for finding the necessary funding for a reauthorization bill.

**Boehner Kills Gas Tax Talk:** Comments by several Senate Republicans about increasing the federal gas tax started this Congress off with optimism about the potential for finding new federal sources of funding for transportation. But more recent comments from several members of the House have all but closed the door on this option. Most importantly, Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) basically shot down any chance of a gas tax increase this year in an interview on *60 Minutes* last weekend. That said, he did leave open the possibility of using a tax reform bill to create new revenue for transportation spending.

**Sanders Introduces Trillion Dollar Infrastructure Bill:** Earlier this week, Senator Bernie Sanders (D-VT) introduced legislation that would provide \$1 trillion for a wide array of infrastructure projects, including \$75 billion per year for the Highway Trust Fund, funding for an infrastructure bank, and significant increases in funding for aviation, rail, water infrastructure, ports, national parks, and broadband. The bill is likely a non-starter for a variety of reasons, one of which is that it doesn't contain a pay-for. It does, however, attempt to raise the public consciousness of the importance of investing in the nation's infrastructure. Click [HERE](#) for an op-ed by Senator Sanders about his bill.

**How the Changing Energy Markets Will Affect U.S. Transportation:** The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials will hold a hearing on Tuesday, February 3, 2015 at 10:00AM ET. The hearing can be accessed online [HERE](#).

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## ADMINISTRATIVE BRIEF

**Foxx Testifies at EPW Hearing:** At a hearing earlier this week, Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx appeared before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. His testimony contained a couple of noteworthy elements. First, in a moment that has received some media attention, Foxx said, "To hell with the politics" when discussing the need for a dramatic fix for the nation's transportation system and how it's funded. Second, Foxx indicated that the Administration is re-working parts of its *Grow America Act* reauthorization proposal and will release an updated version soon. He did not say what changes can be expected, but did indicate that the pay-for would remain unchanged and any policy changes would be minor. We'll report back when we learn more.

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# REGIONAL BRIEF

**Tracking Commuter Trends and Behavior:** The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) recently released the final installment of a product that analyzes trends and behaviors of the nation's commuters. These 16 briefs contain interesting insight into the demographic shifts and other evolving trends related to a group of travelers – commuters – that make up 28 percent of all daily trips on U.S. roadways and transit systems. These briefs are based on data gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau. Click [HERE](#) to read all sixteen briefs.

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# OPPORTUNITY BRIEF

Click [HERE](#) to view the list of grants and events still open!

## **NARC CONFERENCE: NARC's 2015 National Conference of Regions**

*February 8-10, Washington, DC*

Join your colleagues and register for the National Conference of Regions today! This conference is a forum for locally-elected officials and their regional councils to explore federal policy issues, and discuss NARC's legislative priorities for the 114th Congress. Click [HERE](#) for the conference webpage. Please note: The Silver Line Tour has reached capacity, and is sold out.

## **WEBINAR: Dynamic Mobility Applications (DMA) Bundles**

*February 9, 12:00 - 1:00 PM ET*

The Intelligent Transportation Systems Joint Program Office is holding a series of webinars on the U.S. Department of Transportation's Dynamic Mobility Applications (DMA) bundles, Open Source Application Development Portal, and Analysis Modeling and Simulation Testbed Project. These webinars will inform stakeholders and interested parties of the research effort, progress, and impacts of each bundle. Each 60-minute webinar will present an overview of the bundle, describe the prototypes(s) or algorithms, and summarize the testing and impacts assessment results, as well as include a stakeholder question and answer session. Click [HERE](#) to register.

## **FUNDING: Planning Process Bundle SHRP2 Implementation Assistance Program**

*Application Deadline: February 13*

The Planning Process Bundle is a related group of SHRP2 products within the Capacity focus area that address elements of transportation planning, programming, and project development requiring collaboration with entities outside the primary transportation agency. Two funding opportunities are available through the IAP: (a) Lead Adopter Incentives that use a combination of at least two of these products (up to eight awards at up to \$300,000 each) and (b) User Incentives that use at least one of the products (up to eight awards at up to \$50,000 each). State DOTs, MPOs, and regional planning agencies are eligible to apply. Click [HERE](#) for details.

## **WEBINAR: Transferability: How to Make it Work Best for Your Model**

*February 19, 2:00-4:00PM ET*

This webinar will provide planners with practical guidance to help them determine which transfer methods work best given the types of models and data available to them. The guidance includes variable specification, model updating procedures using some local data, procedures to use when local data are unavailable, and use of data from national sources. Simple examples of the various model transfer methods will be presented. Registration is not necessary. Click [HERE](#) to access the webinar.

## **AWARD: 2015 National Roadway Safety Awards**

*Application Deadline: May 15*

The Roadway Safety Foundation and the Federal Highway Administration are accepting applications for their joint 2015 National Roadway Safety Awards. Awards are presented in two categories: Infrastructure and Operational Improvements and Program Planning, Development, and Evaluation. Projects in both award categories are judged on their effectiveness, innovation, and efficient use of resources. Selected projects are included in a noteworthy practices guide so they can be replicated nationwide. Click [HERE](#) for the nomination brochure, and [HERE](#) for the application form.