



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

CONGRESS BRIEF

Congress Finalizes Extension

In the early morning hours last Saturday, the Senate finally approved a two-month extension of the nation's transportation program, which was set to expire May 31. Soon after the voice vote took place, the Senate left town for a week-long recess. This extension kicks the can on the program until the end of July, at which point both the authority and the funding will run out. There is little hope of a long-term bill between now and then, so another short term extension – this one likely through the end of 2015 – is the most plausible outcome, assuming members can find the \$11 billion or so it will need to fund the Highway Trust Fund that long. In the meantime, the Senate Environment and Public Works committee appears ready to move with their policy bill, with a markup tentatively scheduled for June 24.

Blast from the Past: Lessons Learned from 1982 Gas Tax Increase

In a report released by the Eno Center for Transportation, Senior Fellow Jeff Davis reveals that the Reagan Administration relied heavily on the ideas of federal deficit reduction and 'New Federalism' to gain bipartisan support for a near doubling of the gas tax in 1982. The report, *Reagan Devolution: The Real Story of the 1982 Gas Tax Increase*, explains New Federalism as a philosophy embraced by the Reagan Administration to devolve authority and funding responsibility to the states for transportation programs and infrastructure projects, and unveils internal White House documentation connecting this idea to the 1982 gas tax increase. Though devolution has been widely recognized as detrimental to state and local efforts to implement transportation projects, the Obama Administration and Congress might find lessons here as they seek a long-term, bipartisan solution to transportation funding.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

FRA Acts to Control Train Speeds

In light of the recent Amtrak derailment near Philadelphia in which speed played a major role, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has issued an Emergency Order to control passenger train speeds along the Northeast Corridor. Amtrak is required to implement an Automatic Train Control (ATC) system code change at the curve where Train 188 derailed, as well as identify similar curves along the Northeast Corridor where the approach speed is a 20mph or more reduction from the maximum passenger train speed limit. Amtrak must submit an action plan and target dates for modifying the ATC warning and enforcement systems at the identified curves.

JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Transportation Planner

South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization, Vineland, NJ

CEO

OPPORTUNITIES

View full list of grants and events!

Climate Adaptation Planning Survey

The University of Vermont Transportation Resource Center seeks feedback from regional transportation and planning agencies to aid in identifying key agency needs related to climate and adaptation challenges. This research project aimed at improving adaptation planning is funded by the USDOT University Transportation Center program.

Building Bridges between Transportation and Health

June 3, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

This American Planning Association webinar will provide insight into the specific process the Nashville Area MPO used to evaluate and prioritize funding for programs that incorporate health into transportation planning, policy, data collection, and measurement. Speakers will inform participants on how advocacy and community organization tools can help move projects forward.

Cargo Cycles for Urban Freight: The European Experience

June 10, 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM ET

As part of its Peer-to-Peer Exchange Program, the VREF Center of Excellence for Sustainable Urban Freight Systems will host this webinar to discuss the use of cargo cycles (two and three-wheeled vehicles) for deliveries and service trips in an effort to make urban commercial transport more effective and eco-friendly. Speakers will overview European efforts and present the German experience with cargo cycles as observed and tested from the perspectives of the private sector, public administration, and academia.

Reducing Life Cycle GHG Emissions from Road Construction and Maintenance

June 11, 10:00 – 11:00 AM ET

Lifecycle Assessment (LCA) is a quantitative approach for evaluating the environmental sustainability of a product or system by calculating the material and energy flows, consequent environmental pollutants, and effects of a system from “cradle to grave.” Applying LCA to pavement can anticipate unintended consequences of a policy or practice by considering all life cycle phases and/or the interaction of pavement systems with road users. The National Center for Sustainable Transportation and the Policy Institute for Energy, Environment, and the Economy will host this webinar to highlight current modeling and analysis of pavement LCA, with an emphasis on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This webinar is based on a soon-to-be-released white paper from the National Center for Sustainable Transportation entitled “Reduction of Life Cycle Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Road Construction and Maintenance and the Role Of Life Cycle Assessment,” which will be posted following the webinar.

Local Labor Hiring Preference Program

June 18, 12:00 – 1:00 PM ET

FHWA will host this outreach web meeting to provide an overview of a new “Contracting Initiative” pilot program conducted by FHWA and FTA that will allow state and local grant recipients to use social and economic contracting requirements (labor hiring preferences) for transportation construction projects. The year-long pilot experiment will include an evaluation of the impacts of labor hiring preferences on the competitive bidding process.

Transit Construction & Streetcar Workshop

September 1-3

FTA will bring together project developers, engineers, and construction managers from transit agencies in a three-day idea-sharing forum to discuss methods to improve the implementation of major streetcar, bus circulator, and other major transit projects.

NARC’s 49th Annual Conference and Exhibition

June 7-10, Raleigh, NC

Join the conversation on the latest in regional government at NARC's Annual Conference and Exhibition, hosted by the Triangle J Council of Governments. Events begin Sunday afternoon with two optional mobile workshops exploring Raleigh. Sessions will highlight innovations in transportation, digital technology, street design, the impact of changing demographics, economic development tools for regions, collaborating to reduce waste, economic transformation in the region, workforce, green infrastructure, and water resources.

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