



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

CONGRESS BRIEF

Senate Passes Long-Term Reauthorization...

A little after noon today, the Senate passed its long-term transportation authorization legislation by a vote of **65 to 34**. The so-called *DRIVE Act* authorizes the nation's transportation program for six years, while providing just three years of Highway Trust Fund transfers. The bill provides more funding than was originally anticipated, but still increases federal transportation investments by a few percentage points, far less than what is needed to maintain and improve the nation's transportation system. The bill contains a number of items that NARC and its coalition partners worked hard to secure: 100% suballocation of the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), funding for bridges not on the National Highway System, and a fix to the MAP-21 requirement regarding transit representation on MPO boards.

The bill also contains an increase in the share of STP funding that is distributed by population – the highest priority for NARC and its partners – but due to other changes, it represents a decrease in STP for local areas. As many of you are aware, we worked hard to encourage passage of amendment #2289 by Senators Wicker (R-MS) and Booker (D-NJ). The amendment would have increased STP funding *and* increased the share distributed by population, which would have meant an additional \$1 billion in STP for local governments. Many of you were essential to securing support for this amendment. Unfortunately, amendments were not allowed. Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) used a procedure called “filling the amendment tree” to prevent non-germane amendments from bogging the bill down, which blocked all amendments from the floor. While certainly a disappointing outcome, this is only the first step in a long process. More details about the Senate package will be available soon, along with a longer update on amendment #2289.

... And Short-Term Extension

While the Senate was completing work on its long-term reauthorization package, it was also gearing up for a vote on a short-term extension to keep the program operating beyond the July 31 expiration, a deadline created by a previous short-term extension. By a vote of 91 to 4, the Senate approved **H.R. 3236**, which the House passed earlier this week. Earlier, the House passed a five-month extension but Senators felt that was too long, so the House responded by passing a shorter version. Interestingly, both bills contain approximately \$8 billion in funding, so despite the shorter duration, the three-month extension will not require additional funding to be identified. The hope is that the House will take up its reauthorization bill after the August recess and that the two bills can be conferenced in advance of the program's new expiration date, October 29.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

Demand for TIGER Grants Far Exceeds Availability

The TIGER Discretionary Grant Program is one of the only sources of federal funding for multi-modal projects available to cities and regions. The 2015 TIGER application period reaffirmed the need for such funding and reiterated the common theme across all transportation programs, that there isn't enough money to go around. This latest round of TIGER funding drew 625 applications

requesting \$9.8 billion, nearly twenty times higher than the \$500 million in available funding.

New Built Environment Assessment Tool

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention designed a new Built Environment Assessment Tool (BE Tool) to alleviate some of the challenges posed by the significant number of narrowly focused tools aimed at only one activity, one subpopulation, or one public health area. It was created as a collaborative enterprise across multiple areas of public health, and is a direct systematic observation data collection instrument for measuring the core features and quality of the built environment related to behaviors that affect health, like walking, biking, and other types of physical activity. The core features assessed in the BE Tool include: built environment infrastructure, walkability, bikeability, recreational sites and structures, and the food environment.

Final Rule on Unattended Trains

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced new requirements regarding safety technology and protocol for unattended trains. The FRA's **Final Rule: Securement of Unattended Equipment** requires that locomotives have and use exterior locks, have sufficient handbrakes, and that a second trained employee double-checks for proper securement. In light of the 2013 fatal derailment of a crude oil freight train in Lac-Mégantic, Canada and similar American derailments since, the rule applies to unattended trains carrying 20 or more cars of high-hazard flammable materials and/or carrying hazardous materials that are poisonous or toxic by inhalation.

REGIONS BRIEF

Want your organization featured here? Send details to erich@narc.org.

MORPC Studies Impact of Regional Trails

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), in collaboration with Metro Parks, Ohio Parks and Recreation Association, Rails to Trails Conservancy, and several local cities, recently conducted an analysis of its entire regional trail network. The resulting report, **Impacts of Central Ohio Trails Study**, uses data collected by the University of Minnesota regarding trail usage, trail user profiles, property values along trails, and trail project costs. The results are being used to inform local governments, businesses, and parks and recreation departments of the impacts of the region's trails.

COMPASS Awards Implementation Grants

The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) recently announced grant funding for ten regional projects that address congestion, infrastructure investment, and planning for alternative transportation. This grant program was established in 2014 to fund local projects that reinforce the goals of the region as a whole, in an effort to support its local member agencies in implementing their regional long-range transportation plan.

SJCOG Approves Funding for Stockton Airport Expansion

San Joaquin County voters passed a thirty-year renewal in 2006 of **Measure K**, a half-cent sales tax dedicated to the county's transportation projects. The revenue from Measure K is allocated according to an expenditure plan designed and administered by the San Joaquin Council of Governments (SJCOG). SJCOG recently approved a \$9.7 million loan to fund the expansion and modernization of Stockton Metropolitan Airport. This expansion would create a customs inspection and baggage facility to attract additional carriers to the region.

Pollution Tech Company Partners with Google to Monitor Air Quality

Aclima, Inc., a San Francisco-based air quality technology company, partnered with Google to further the development of pollution-related health and environmental impact studies. Aclima, Inc. equipped Google's Street View cars with air quality monitoring stations that collect localized data on pollutants in San Francisco's neighborhoods and corridors. The objective is to better understand the relationship between the changing patterns and sources of pollution and the quality of the air at a specific location, at a specific date and time. The technology has already been tested in Denver, and an **interactive map** of the air quality dataset provides information on when

and where air quality is at its worst throughout the city.

JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Alamo Aging Office Assistant P-T

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

OPPORTUNITIES

[View full list of grants and events!](#)

Americans' Views of Transportation and Livable Communities

August 5, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

The National Association of Realtors and Portland State University conducted a nationwide survey in the 50 largest metropolitan areas, asking Americans about where they live, where they want to live, and their travel habits. This webinar will present key findings from that survey, including people's preferences to live in mixed-use, walkable communities and what may help them walk, bicycle, and take transit more.

SmartWay Logistics Company Tool Demonstration

August 5, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

Hosted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, this webinar will demonstrate how logistics companies can use the SmartWay Logistics Company Tool with their 2014 carrier data. The tool allows companies to calculate their emission baseline, evaluate carrier choices based on environmental performance, and track annual changes in performance.

Vehicle Inventory Use Survey Listening Session

August 6, 1:00 – 3:30 PM ET

The Vehicle Inventory Use Survey (VIUS) was the principal data source on the physical and operational characteristics of the U.S. truck population at the state and national level, but was discontinued in 2002. The VIUS data supported a wide range of public and private transportation decisions and provided critical information on safety analyses and risks, fuel consumption, economic productivity, and environmental impacts of transportation. In an effort to restore VIUS, FHWA, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, U.S. Department of Energy, and U.S. Department of Agriculture are jointly funding a study to design and scope a new VIUS using new survey technologies. This Public Listening Session is your opportunity to provide input on how you used VIUS data, which survey elements are essential to your future data and policy needs, and which elements you think need to be added or deleted from the **questionnaire**.

TMIP: ARC and MAG Present Lessons Learned

August 6, 2:00 – 4:00 PM ET

FHWA's Travel Model Improvement Program (**TMIP**) will host this webinar to introduce presentations from the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG). ARC will share its lessons learned in leveraging the NPMRDS data for developing its activity-based and dynamic traffic assignment models, including NPMRDS data mining, outlier detection, and data filtering. MAG will detail the innovative data collection techniques used to execute data collection for a regional airports survey, and will present the approach and methodology used for the survey.

NARC Conference! Becoming Your Best: Professional Development Training for Executive Directors

August 9-11, Austin, TX

Join NARC and the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for the 2015 Professional Development Training for Executive Directors conference in Austin, TX. At the first ever Professional Development Training for Executive Directors conference put on by NARC and NADO, you will have the opportunity to network, share best practices, and explore

opportunities for strengthening professional capacity and development. You won't want to miss it!

Central New Mexico Climate Change Scenario Planning Project

August 12, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

FHWA's Office of Planning and FTA's Office of Planning and Environment are sponsoring a Transportation Planning Information Exchange Webinar Series for state, local, regional and tribal governments, transit operators, stakeholders, and community leaders to help improve transportation decision-making. This webinar will highlight the Central New Mexico Climate Change Scenario Planning Project, with speakers from the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center and the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG) examining how preferred land use and transportation scenarios for a region will be affected by future climate change impacts, and how to successfully integrate climate change analysis into the region's scenario planning process and Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

TRB Call for Posters: FRESH IDEAS for Military Transportation

Due Date: August 31

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) Military Transportation Committee (AT035) is accepting abstracts for poster presentation at the **TRB Annual Meeting** in Washington, DC (January 10-14, 2016). The Committee is seeking "fresh ideas" for military transportation at a poster session and potentially at the AT035 committee meeting.

CONTACT US

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