



**NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS**

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

## CONGRESS BRIEF

*Congress is not in session. The House and Senate will return on September 8.*

### **Funny Math in the Senate's DRIVE Act**

One of the largest “offsets” in the Senate’s *DRIVE Act* reauthorization bill passed last month is a proposal to sell more than 100 million barrels of crude oil from the nation’s Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). The SPR is a 700 million barrel oil reserve maintained by the federal government for use during times of crisis. Some argue it is a relic of the past, now that a much larger share of the nation's oil is derived from domestic sources as compared to production during the 1970s energy crisis.

Regardless of how you feel about the reserve itself, there is no doubt that it has become a target of those in Congress looking for legislative pay-fors (the Senate *DRIVE Act* was not the first piece of legislation to propose selling oil from the reserve). This is an indication not only of Congress’ desperation to find dollars, but of its willingness to exaggerate numbers for the purpose of passing a bill. In the *DRIVE Act*, Congress assumes oil will sell for \$90 per barrel, providing more than \$9 billion for the Highway Trust Fund. The current price of oil is about half of that, around \$45 per barrel. Congress is able to do this because the Congressional Budget Office predicted, back in December when oil was \$65 a barrel, that the price of oil was going to rise. They were wrong, but in the quirky world of congressional budgeting, prediction trumps reality.

## ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

### **Public Transportation Safety Program Rulemaking Released**

In the aftermath of a recent train derailment on Washington, D.C.’s Metro rail system, the Federal Transit Agency (FTA) last week released a proposed rule establishing a Public Transportation Safety Program. One aspect of the program includes giving the FTA Administrator new powers to take enforcement actions against transit agencies that violate federal law, as well as the authority to penalize offending agencies by withholding federal funds or requiring more frequent reporting. Public comment will be accepted on the proposal rule until October 13.

## REGIONS BRIEF

*Want your organization featured here? Send details to [erich@narc.org](mailto:erich@narc.org).*

### **TMACOG Wraps Up Gas Cap Replacement Program**

This June and July, the Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (TMACOG) partnered with the City of Toledo Division of Environmental Services to conduct gas cap compression tests at various locations throughout the city. As part of TMACOG’s Gas Cap Replacement Program, the compression tests were aimed at reducing ozone by curbing emissions from leaky, faulty, and missing gas caps. Properly sealed gas caps not only prevent the escape of gasoline vapors that eventually develop ground-level ozone, but may also save drivers up to two tanks of gas per year. Gas cap checks were available for cars and light-duty vehicles, and leaky and missing caps were replaced for free.

## JOBS

***View full list of jobs!***

## **Office and Communications Specialist**

Yakima Valley Conference of Governments, Yakima, WA

## **Natural Resources Transportation Specialist Part Time**

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

## **Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Action Plan (BDSAP) Consultant**

Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, Fort Lauderdale, FL

# **OPPORTUNITIES**

*View full list of grants and events!*

## **INRIX XD Traffic Data in Action: How Improved Granularity Translates into Improved Operations and Performance Measurement**

August 25, 1:30 – 3:00 PM ET

Introduced in late 2013, INRIX XD Traffic products provide increased coverage and improved granularity over traditional approaches. This webinar focuses on the specific efforts of Purdue University and Indiana DOT to use XD speed data to improve operations and performance measurement, including the first-of-its-kind statewide real-time "back of queue" detection system that was not possible prior to the reporting granularity XD segments enable. Purdue researchers Darcy Bullock and Steve Remias will discuss a series of topics regarding uses of INRIX Mobility Data in Indiana.

## **2015 Transportation Planning Excellence Awards Program, Part 1**

August 26, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

Several regional transportation planning organizations will discuss their TPEA winning projects in the areas of Planning and Environmental Linkages for Livability, Sustainability, and Public Health. This webinar will also examine best practices throughout the nation. Presenters include Pikes Peak Area COG (Colorado Springs, CO), the Regional Transportation Commission of Washoe County, NV, Pennsylvania DOT, and Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia Transportation Planning Organization.

## **2015 Transportation Planning Excellence Awards Program, Part 2**

September 2, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

Presenters will discuss their TPEA-winning projects in the area of Public Involvement and Outreach, Modeling and Technology Applications, as well as Emergency Management and Transportation Security Planning. This webinar will also examine best practices throughout the nation. Presenters include Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission, Capital Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Austin, TX); Oregon DOT; and Minnesota DOT.

## **Passenger Ferry Grant Program Webinar**

September 2, 1:30 – 2:30 PM ET

FTA will host a webinar to provide an overview of the FY 2015 Notice of Funding Availability, eligible applicants, eligibility requirements, evaluation criteria, application form requirements, and answer any questions from potential applicants.

## **Towards Sustainable Pavements: Use Phase, Livable Communities, and Path Forward**

September 9, 1:00 – 3:00 PM ET

FHWA's Sustainable Pavements Program recently published a major technical resource, *Towards Sustainable Pavement Systems: A Reference Document*, and is now delivering a series of five webinars to help implement and promote key elements of pavement sustainability. The final webinar will focus on the interaction between vehicles and pavement, fuel consumption, emissions, and noise. Other topics that will be discussed include urban heat island, lighting, stormwater runoff, and impact on surrounding communities.

## **Multimodality in Major Cities: Urban Success Stories**

September 16, 2:00 – 3:30 PM ET

The Transportation Research Board's Standing Committee on Transportation Issues in Major Cities will provide information about urban multimodal projects and the successes and challenges these projects faced with implementation. The discussion will include lessons learned from Salt

Lake City, Austin, and New York City, followed by a Q&A session.

## **Public Transportation Safety Program Notice of Proposed Rulemaking**

September 17, 1:00 PM ET

FTA's Office of Transit Safety & Oversight will discuss the Public Transportation Safety Program Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (**NPRM**) recently published in the Federal Register. They will examine provisions of the proposed rule and how industry stakeholders can get involved in the regulatory process. The proposed rule would formally adopt Safety Management Systems as the basis for FTA's new Public Transportation Safety Program. To ensure consistency in the implementation of this new program, the proposed rule would establish the framework for the FTA Administrator's authority to monitor, oversee, and enforce safety in the public transportation industry. The proposed rule also outlines proposed content for the National Public Transportation Safety Plan which will be the subject of its own Federal Register notice expected to be published later this year.

## **CONTACT US**

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