



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

CONGRESS BRIEF

PABs and the Tax Bill

The House GOP tax bill being discussed this week would eliminate private activity bonds, an important funding source for local projects and public private partnerships (P3s). A Democratic amendment yesterday would have preserved the deduction of tax-exempt private activity bonds (PABs), but was rejected along party lines. The exclusion of this financing tool has caused concern among transportation stakeholders and confusion based on the administration's interest in P3s. House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) agrees that the issue needs to be re-examined in the tax plan. It is unclear how the Senate will treat the issue in its version.

In a **letter to House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady** (R-TX), NARC and 28 other organizations expressed their opposition to provisions in H.R. 1 regarding PABs: (1) the repeal of the ability to advance refund municipal bonds and (2) the termination of the ability to use PABs.

Recently Introduced Bills

H.R. 4251: Rebuilding Resilient Energy Systems Act of 2017

Congressman José E. Serrano (D-NY) and Congresswoman Jenniffer González-Colón (R-PR) introduced the *Rebuilding Resilient Energy Systems Act of 2017* last week that would allow *Stafford Act* disaster funding to be used to rebuild more resilient and efficient energy systems for disaster affected areas. This would allow affected states and territories to rebuild energy systems to prepare for future disasters. The bill has been referred to the T&I Committee and the Science, Space, and Technology Committee.

H.R. 4241: Transportation Access and System Connection Act of 2017

Congresswoman Elizabeth Esty (D-CT) with Daniel Lipinski (D-IL), Rodney Davis (R-IL), and Barbara Comstock (R-VA) introduced a bill to the House T&I Committee for a data collecting pilot program. The program would create a data set for states and MPOs with information measuring level of access by all transportation modes to key locations such as jobs, healthcare, food, and education. The bill would direct the transportation secretary to choose five states and ten MPOs to pilot the program and evaluate the benefits of the data sets.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

CRS Report: Public Private Partnerships (P3s) in Transportation

Congressional Research Services (CRS) released a comprehensive summary report on P3s in transportation with information on types, benefits, and policy issues surrounding these partnerships. The report also explores the federal role, including information on the *Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act* (TIFIA) program and private activity bonds. The report also discusses ways the federal government can pursue policies to encourage P3s, such as assets recycling, incentive grants, tolls, and infrastructure banks.

Lack of Transparency in Certain Competitive DOT Grants

A Government Accountability Office (GAO) report has found that USDOT is lacking documentation for the awardee selection process and rationale for the Fostering Advancement in

Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies (FASTLANE) grants. The highlighted section of the report states that DOT did not provide insight into why some projects were chosen over others and that DOT did not finalize the evaluation plan prior to announcing the solicitation for FY2016, which is required by DOT guidance. The evaluation plan was also not announced prior to the solicitation of applications for the new program under the Trump Administration, indicating a possible continuation of consistency and transparency issues. GAO recommends that DOT develop an evaluation plan, notify the applicants of the outcomes with reasoning, and document key decisions throughout the application review and selection process.

Based on this report, the bipartisan leadership of the House T&I Committee and the Highways and Transit Subcommittee **requested that GAO** continue its oversight of the USDOT INFRA program, formerly known as FASTLANE. The review of the program was required under the FAST Act for the first year of the program, but committee leaders have asked GAO to continue this assessment for the length of the grant program.

DOT Drone Integration Pilot Program

Secretary Elaine Chao **announced last week** the Drone Integration Pilot Program to establish partnerships between local governments, FAA, and private drone operators to experiment with new technologies. The data and best practices collected by this program will be the basis for new regulations to integrate drones into the national airspace. The final **Federal Register Notice** was published on November 8 and lists MPOs as eligible jurisdictions to participate in the program. A notice of intent is due by November 28.

FHWA Extends Comment Period for GHG NPRM

FHWA is extending the comment period for the greenhouse gas (GHG) measure NPRM, which was published on October 5, 2017. The extension is based on concern expressed by stakeholders that this closing date does not provide sufficient time to review and provide comprehensive comments on the proposal. The new closing date for comments is November 15. The **docket is available online**.

REGIONS BRIEF

APA KnowledgeBase Collection: AVs

The American Planning Association (APA) has assembled reports, articles, briefing papers, guides, plans, websites, and videos to educate and guide planners to prepare cities and regions for autonomous vehicles (AVs). They have also uploaded videos of their **AV Symposium** broken out by session. The event was for stakeholders in Washington, D.C. to discuss and plan for AV impacts in cities and regions. NARC attended this event.

Transportation Ballot Results

Several communities across the country voted on transportation investments on Tuesday. Denver, Colorado voted for a \$1 billion infrastructure bond for transportation projects and transit; and Lawrence, Kansas voted to extend their expiring sales taxes that fund roads and mass transit. The Center for Transportation Excellence search tool allows you to search by election to see further results.

JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Principal Transportation Engineer/Planner

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Philadelphia, PA

Transportation Director

Greater Portland Council of Governments, Portland, ME

OPPORTUNITIES

View full list of grants and events!

International Urban Freight (I-NUF) Conference Presentations – Examining and

Addressing Urban Goods Movement Needs

November 15, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

Freight transportation issues and needs often have a particularly significant impact in urban areas. The high volumes of freight transportation activity that takes place in urban areas and the need to better understand the needs and impacts of urban freight movements has inspired a significant amount of research on urban freight transportation. This webinar will include three presentations given at the 2017 METTRANS International Urban Freight Conference. The three presentations will particularly focus on challenges with urban freight transportation and delivery challenges and how better understanding attributes such as business freight delivery needs, municipal parking and zoning regulations, and urban street design can better allow transportation planners to address urban goods movements within their communities.

MAG Behavioral Freight Model and Regional Microsimulation Model

November 15, 2:00 – 4:00 PM ET

This webinar will cover two projects. First, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), Arizona DOT, and Pima Association of Governments in close cooperation with FHWA developed and implemented an innovative multimodal mega-regional freight model. This model was designed for evaluation of freight planning policies and economic development scenarios relevant to the Arizona Sun Corridor megaregion. The presentation will cover the main sub-models and visualization tools, freight data issues and lessons learned throughout the project. MAG also has developed a region-wide microsimulation model. The model has been utilized for the analysis of various operational improvements and planning scenarios, including large sub-area studies. The presenters will discuss model input data, challenges in the course of model development, and validation processes and results. Demonstrations of some of the model applications will be presented as well. The presentation will conclude with visualization tools, including Interactive maps for visualization of the time-dependent input data and simulated results.

Charging Ahead: The Rise of Electric Vehicles

November 16, 11:00 – 12:00 PM ET

The electric vehicle (EV) industry continues to innovate and expand, buoyed by recent announcements from France, India and other countries of ambitious goals to phase out the use of gasoline- and diesel-powered engines over the coming decades. In the U.S., Tesla has set the pace for the development of EVs—garnering considerable media attention in the process. Other manufacturers have followed suit with their own ventures, creating an increasingly competitive market that has helped to drive down the cost of what was once a luxury price point product. This webinar will examine the industry's history, development and future, and address several key questions.

Performance-Based Planning and Programming Roundtable Webinar

November 29, 1:30 – 3:30 PM ET

This Performance-Based Planning Roundtable Webinar, hosted by FTA, APTA, and AMPO, will explore potential methods and processes for transit agencies to coordinate with MPOs and state DOTs to implement a performance-based approach to transportation planning. The event will provide the opportunity to learn about MAP-21 and FAST Act requirements for performance-based planning as well as the experiences of MPOs and transit agencies working to implement performance-based planning.

Level of Service in the New World of Performance Measurement

November 30, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

In the past year, the USDOT Office of the Secretary has conducted three case studies on Level of Service (LOS) and how some state and local agencies are taking advantage of federal flexibility to reconsider their use of LOS as they attempt to resolve broader transportation-related challenges. This FHWA webinar will review the results of this work.

4th Annual NACDD Walkability Action Institute (WAI) RFA

Applications due: December 8

WAI is a multi-day course hosted by the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) that targets interdisciplinary teams comprised of public health, transportation, planning, elected officials, and a variety of other diverse disciplines to create more walkable communities through new and supportive policies, systems, and environments. The course includes a variety of learning methods and incorporates both indoor and outdoor learning

activities. Additionally, WAI addresses inclusivity for people with disabilities, as well as explores racial, ethnic, and “place” equity. Over the last three years, NACDD has selected a total of 32 interdisciplinary teams from 23 states to attend the course. This year they hope to provide travel assistance to **eight additional interdisciplinary MPO (or regional equivalent) teams**. Teams can and should be made up of a wide set of actors (across a variety of key disciplines and including both elected and non-elected participants), but the lead applicant must be an MPO, regional planning council, area agency on aging, or other regional organization involved in walkability.

CONTACT US

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