



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

CONGRESS BRIEF

Next up for Transportation Reauthorization

Following the passage of the House *Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act* last week, each chamber appointed members for the conference process to resolve differences between the two versions of the bill. On the Senate side there are seven Republicans and six Democrats including the top ranking members in the Environment and Public Works committee, James Inhofe (R-OK) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA). The lower chamber has **appointed** sixteen Republicans and twelve Democrats including the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) and ranking member Peter DeFazio (D-OR). Senator Inhofe seemed confident that a bill could be on the President's desk by Thanksgiving with the hope that the two chambers can reach an agreement quickly. The House returns next week and the deadline for the current short-term extension is November 20.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

Highway Trust Fund Hits Lowest Level in Years

In July, the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) contained only \$6.1 billion, its lowest level in decades. Even after Congress approved a transfer of more than \$8.1 billion, bringing the HTF to \$12 billion, that was the second-lowest level to end a fiscal year since 1984. In FY15, the HTF was spending almost \$4 billion a month while the average net tax receipts were only \$3 billion. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) explains that tax receipts are based on fuel consumption and even as the fuel economy improves, tax receipts will not. The result is a chronic deficit problem for the Highway Trust Fund.

FRA Releases Options to Guide Future Investment in Nation's Critical Northeast Corridor

This week, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) released a *Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (EIS) for the Northeast Corridor between Washington, D.C. and Boston, MA improvements. This Draft EIS includes several alternatives as well as a no change alternative with the costs of each. The Northeast Corridor is the busiest rail corridor in the country and includes eight states and Washington, DC. Significant focus has been placed on this aging section of infrastructure and the need for investment. Several public hearings will take place through January for public comment on the alternatives.

REGIONS BRIEF

Feds, Amtrak Agree to Pay for Half of NYC Rail Tunnel

The Gateway Project received good news when USDOT and Amtrak agreed to pay half the costs for the tunnel from New York to New Jersey. The project will double capacity in this highly congested commuter section between New York and New Jersey. New Jersey Governor Chris Christie and New York Governor Andrew Cuomo agreed to pay for the other half of the tunnel in August if the federal government stepped up.

JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Land Use/Transportation Planner

Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments, Kelso, WA

Regional Transportation Demand Management Planner

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

OPPORTUNITIES

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

Low or No Emission Vehicle Deployment Program Webinar

November 12, 12:30 – 1:30 PM ET

FTA will cover common questions and go over the application process for the Low or No Emission Vehicle Deployment Program, with Q&A to follow.

Innovation...It's More Than a Buzz Word

November 17, 12:00 – 1:00 PM ET

The infusion of new technologies into transportation systems is on the rise and increasing in pace. Such infusion introduces opportunities and risk. As just one example, GPS is already enabling fast, safe, and efficient transportation—but how do we avoid becoming so reliant on GPS that transportation is interrupted and safety is threatened? We innovate.

Talking Freight: International Urban Freight Conference Presentation – Warehouse Locations and Community Impacts

November 18, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

Warehousing and distribution facilities serve a wide variety of industries and are located in a variety of locations. Warehouse design and transportation network needs can be quite different depending on where they are built and the geographic area they serve. Additionally, warehouses and distribution facilities create community impact. This webinar includes three presentations that focus on warehouse and distribution center location patterns, both in urban vs. suburban terms and relative to environmental justice community location terms.

Online Dialogue: Breaking Down Employment Barriers with Accessible Transportation Innovation

Open Until November 20

Travelers with disabilities, including veterans and older adults, often face mobility challenges due to a lack of accessible transportation options. A number of emerging personal mobility options can change this and provide better options for all travelers to get from point a to point b, including to and from places of employment. Research in accessible transportation, such as on-demand operations, virtual concierge travel assistance through mobile devices, and assistive robots, has gained new momentum in recent years. The goal of this online dialogue, hosted by the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) and the U.S. Department of Transportation's Accessible Transportation Technologies Research Initiative (ATTRI), is to gather insights on future accessible transportation solutions that will further develop and enhance transportation options to support employment for people with disabilities.

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