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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

CONGRESS BRIEF

Reauthorization Update: End is in Sight

Earlier today, by a vote of **359-65**, the House gave its approval to the *Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act* (FAST), a 5-year reauthorization of the nation's surface transportation program. The FAST Act contains \$281 billion in contract authority for surface transportation programs, in addition to approximately \$24 billion in funding for a rail title and other items not funded through the highway trust fund. The bill's total rings in it at \$305 billion. To pay for the FAST Act, Congress reached deep into its bag of tricks. The largest single pay-for is a drawdown of Federal Reserve "surplus accounts." Also included is a sale of oil from the nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) and other non-user based funding sources.

The Senate will take up the bill later today, and may clear it tonight if they can waive several points of order that could be raised against the legislation. If they cannot get a final vote tonight, the Senate will vote by Tuesday on final passage. No matter when the Senate acts, one last final short-term extension is likely necessary to provide adequate time to prepare the bill for President Obama's signature. He has already indicated that he is prepared to sign. The current extension expires at midnight tomorrow.

The good news is that the bill is full of items for which NARC has been advocating. This includes additional local funding through the Surface Transportation Program, an increase in Transportation Alternatives Program and Metropolitan Planning funding, and a fix to the MAP-21 requirement that MPOs add a transit representative to their board. This was a successful endeavor in many ways. The final bill reflects a recognition that additional local funding and authority are essential to a strong federal transportation program.

To learn more about what the bill contains, NARC has prepared an **analysis** outlining how the FAST Act changes current law on the issues that we feel are most important to NARC membership. We are still going through additional sections of the bill, including the transit title (which reinstates a competitive Bus and Bus Facilities Program), rail title, freight provisions (MPOs are eligible recipients under the discretionary freight program but not the formula program), safety provisions, and other areas of the bill. We'll provide further analysis of these sections as soon as possible.

NARC also released a **statement on the bill** earlier today.

Contact Your Senators!

Though the House has already acted, the Senate still needs to pass the FAST Act. That could happen as early as this evening, but could drag on into next week. **We urge you to contact your Senators and encourage them to complete this bill as quickly as possible.** We've been waiting for ten years for a long-term reauthorization and there is no reason to wait until next week to finalize this piece of legislation!

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

2010-2014 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Released Today

The U.S. Census Bureau released the 2010-2014 five-year census data with supplemental documents to help users understand the report.

Amtrak Ridership and Ticket Revenue Steady in Fiscal Year 2015

Yesterday, Amtrak released a report showing the steady rate of ticket revenue and ridership over the past year along with other fiscal year 2015 data. The steady rate shows the continued demand for passenger rail and the importance of investment. Amtrak is working on several projects to improve service, including the Gateway Program in the Northeast Corridor.

IDEAs for Highway Systems: Annual Progress Report

The Transportation Research Board's Innovations Deserving Exploratory Analysis (IDEAs) program released their annual progress report that summarizes projects completed or active in 2015 year of the program.

REGIONS BRIEF

Oklahoma City Metro-Area Mayors Vow Cooperation for Regional Transit Services

Six mayors in the Oklahoma City area came together this week to pledge cooperation in developing regional transit options, such as express buses and a commuter rail. The cities will be splitting the costs of creating a Regional Transit Authority Task Force and will spend the next three years developing this agency and laying the groundwork for a more connected region.

New Platinum, New Gold Bicycle Friendly Communities

The League of American Bicyclists named 55 new and renewing Bicycle Friendly Communities last month, raising the total to 371 communities. Madison, Wisconsin was the first city to be added to the Platinum ranking since 2013. The program has a five tier ranking system that rewards cities and towns for their dedication to the health, safety, and quality of life of their communities.

JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Resource Development – Principal Planner

Community Planning Association, Meridian, ID

Alamo Service Connection Veteran’s Care Specialist

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Alamo Service Connection Care Specialist – Local Contact Agent

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Solicitation RFQ No. 15-06: Mobility Hub Planning, Design and Implementation

Broward Metropolitan Planning Organization, Fort Lauderdale, FL

OPPORTUNITIES

View full list of grants and events!

USDOT Connected Vehicles Pilot Deployment Program Technical Assistance Webinar Series

USDOT developed a series of webinars to assist the Connected Vehicle Pilot sites, early adopters of connected vehicle technology, and other interested stakeholders. The Connected Vehicle Pilot Deployment Program seeks to combine connected vehicle and mobile device technologies in innovative and cost-effective ways. Ultimately, this program will improve traveler mobility and system productivity while reducing environmental impacts and enhancing safety.

Preparing a Safety Management Plan for Connected Vehicle Deployments

December 7, 2:00-3:30 PM ET

Preparing a Security Operational Concept for Connected Vehicle Deployment

December 9, 1:30-3:00 PM ET

Preparing an Institutional/Business Model and Financial Sustainability for Connected Vehicle Deployments

December 10, 12:30-2:00 PM ET

Enhanced Project Management Design Tools - Utah DOT Case Study

December 9, 1:00-2:00 PM ET

The Utah Department of Transportation's (UDOT) network asset inventory effort created new opportunities to apply state-of-the-art management techniques and analytics. In just minutes, UDOT staff can develop project design and cost estimates, develop project plan sets, create complex asset queries, and develop concept reports related to any road on UDOT's system. Learn how this new systemic approach to asset management works and is being used to prepare UDOT for 21st Century transportation system management challenges.

Regional Models of Cooperation - Safety Planning

December 10, 1:00-2:00 PM ET

The safety of the transportation system is of the utmost importance in every jurisdiction and safety planning topics often involve cooperation across jurisdictional boundaries. Transportation organizations are working collaboratively to identify, prioritize, and address safety issues at regional and statewide scales, resulting in a safer transportation system. In this webinar, state DOTs and MPOs will share their experiences collaborating across jurisdictions on safety planning, including discussion of their collaborative techniques as well as their improved outcomes.

Countermeasure Strategies for Pedestrian Safety: Pedestrian Safety at Interchanges

December 10, 4:00-5:30 PM ET

This webinar will provide an in-depth look at safety issues associated with interchanges and some of the design solutions that can be used to address these problems. The presentation will also include several case study examples.

Introduction to the Freight Analysis Framework (FAF4)

December 11, 1:00-2:30 PM ET

This webinar will introduce the fourth generation of the Freight Analysis Framework (FAF4) providing an overview of the dataset and what's new in FAF 4.0. In addition, this webinar will also discuss the upcoming releases to FAF4, including improvements and new products on the way. This webinar is aimed toward practitioners in state departments of transportation, metropolitan/regional planning organizations, and other organizations who have basic or little knowledge of the FAF.

USDOT Smart City Forum

December 15, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM ET

USDOT invites you to join them for the Smart City Forum at their headquarters in Washington, DC or via webcast. During the forum, participants will be able to share promising practices in advancing smart city technology; learn about emerging technologies, data tools, and other cool apps; and engage in a robust discussion on key elements that are necessary for advancing smart city technologies at the local and regional levels.

Introduction to TREDIS 5: Live Demonstration

December 15, 1:00-2:00 PM ET

This technical webinar will walk you through a sample project to demonstrate how new and existing subscribers can use TREDIS in the transportation planning process. The presentation will go through the input process and workflow to explain how to set up a project within the enhanced interface. The presenters will review outputs, summary infographic, interactive graphs, maps, and tables as they relate to the sample case so that users can leverage them to support infrastructure investment decisions.

CONTACT US

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