

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

777 North Capitol Street, N.E., Suite 300, Washington, D.C. 20002-4290 (202) 962-3310 Fax: (202) 962-3202
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MEMORANDUM

Date: January 9, 2009

To: Transportation Planning Board Technical Committee

From: Ronald Kirby
Director, Department of
Transportation Planning

Subject: Letter to the Region's Congressional Delegation regarding National Economic Stimulus Package

As requested by the TPB at its December 17, 2008 meeting, the attached letter was e-mailed or faxed to the offices of the following members of the Congressional Delegation and State Transportation Leadership, along with the TPB's policy principles for the next federal authorization of surface transportation programs.

Representative Roscoe Bartlett
Representative Gerald Connolly
Representative Donna Edwards
Representative Steny Hoyer
Representative James Moran
Representative Eleanor Holmes-Norton
Representative Christopher Van Hollen
Representative Robert Wittman
Representative Frank Wolf
Senator Ben Cardin
Senator Barbara Mikulski
Senator Mark Warner
Senator James Webb
Pierce R. Homer, Virginia Secretary of Transportation
John D. Porcaro, Maryland Secretary of Transportation
Frank Seales, Jr., Acting Interim Director, District Department of Transportation

Attachment(s)

National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board

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December 30, 2008

The Honorable Roscoe Bartlett
United States House of Representatives
2412 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-2006

Dear Representative Bartlett:

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Washington Region, is very pleased that current plans for an economic stimulus package include significant funding for transportation infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and transit systems. Transportation infrastructure investments provide an excellent opportunity to maximize near term job creation while laying a strong foundation for the nation's future economic growth and competitiveness.

Recognizing the importance of directing stimulus funding to projects that can be implemented quickly, the TPB anticipates that stimulus funding for highway and transit projects will be provided through the existing programs of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation. As the transportation planning agency for a major metropolitan area with significant unmet highway and transit maintenance, rehabilitation, and capacity needs, the TPB believes that the transportation stimulus package must ensure that a fair and equitable share of the funding is directed to addressing the pressing needs of major metropolitan areas, reflecting their critical contribution to the nation's economy. This could be accomplished by distributing at least 35 percent of the funds to major metropolitan areas through the FHWA Surface Transportation Program and the FTA Urbanized Area Formula Program.

In addition to stimulus funding to address pressing near-term economic challenges, the TPB believes that fundamental changes are needed in the structure and funding of ongoing federal surface transportation programs. The TPB recently approved a set of policy principles (copy attached) to help guide the next federal authorization of surface transportation programs, following the expiration of the SAFETEA-LU authorization on September 30, 2009. These policy principles call for a substantial increase in federal transportation funding; an explicit focus on the repair and efficient operation of existing highway and transit systems; uniform evaluation procedures and criteria for assessing all new modal and intermodal capacity increases; and increased funding focused on metropolitan transportation challenges. The TPB hopes you will find these policy principles a useful resource as deliberations proceed on the next transportation authorization bill over the coming year.

Thank you for considering the TPB's views on these important initiatives for the nation's economy and transportation infrastructure. For further information, please contact the Director of Transportation Planning for the TPB, Ronald Kirby, at (202) 962-3310 or rkirby@mwcoq.org.

Sincerely,



Phil Mendelson
Chairman
National Capital Region
Transportation Planning Board

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

Policy Principles for the 2009 Authorization of Federal Surface Transportation Programs

1. Fundamental changes are needed in the current structure and funding of federal surface transportation programs: current planning, programming, and environmental processes are overly cumbersome and inefficient, and inadequate funding levels are resulting in serious under-investment in transportation.
2. An explicit program focus is needed to put and keep the nation's transportation infrastructure in a state of good repair, and to ensure that it is operated efficiently and safely.
3. Decisions on investment in new transportation capacity should be based on a rigorous and comprehensive analysis of economic, social and environmental benefits and costs, which assesses all modal and intermodal options with uniform evaluation procedures and criteria.
4. Federal transportation policy should provide for increased federal funding focused on metropolitan congestion and other metropolitan transportation challenges, with stronger partnerships between federal, state, regional and local transportation officials.
5. A substantial increase in federal transportation funding will be needed to address the current under-investment in the nation's transportation system, and should be sought from:
 - Increases in federal fuel taxes or other user-based taxes and fees;
 - Pricing strategies enabled by emerging technology for all modes of travel, including rates that vary by time of day, type of vehicle, level of emissions, and specific infrastructure segments used;
 - Inclusion of major transportation investments in legislation to create national infrastructure banks or bonding programs; and
 - Auction of pollution emissions allowances.

Approved September 17, 2008

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD

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