



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
1401 EAST BROAD STREET
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219-2000

David S. Ekern, P.E.
COMMISSIONER

June 21, 2007

To: Metropolitan Planning Organizations/Planning District Commissions

Subject: Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

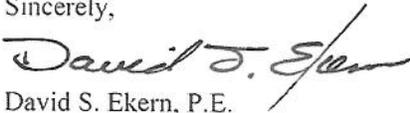
I am pleased to share that, through extensive coordination with the Federal Highway Administration; Virginia's STIP is now in substantial compliance with the provisions of SAFETEA-LU. This determination is critical in light of the passage of HB3202 and the infusion of additional revenue into the transportation program. FHWA's concurrence with our approach will enable us to continue processing STIP/TIP amendments as necessary after July 1st to advance and accelerate Virginia's transportation program and to obligate federal funding. A copy of FHWA's letter is attached for your reference.

A key element of demonstrating a good-faith effort towards compliance with SAFETEA-LU was the development of an addendum to current STIP to include obligation information for FY09 and FY10. In the coming weeks, we will be providing this addendum to each MPO for concurrence. Your action is a key element of demonstrating full compliance with SAFETEA-LU. While we continue to work under the currently approved STIP, we are also looking forward to the development of a new STIP for FY09-12. This process will begin in October with anticipated federal approval of the new FY09-12 STIP in September 2008. A preliminary schedule is attached for your information.

I also want to take this opportunity to let you know about a new initiative I have included in my FY08 Business Plan. This effort is intended to integrate the STIP, Six Year Improvement Program, and Six Year Maintenance and Operations Program into a unified, consistent planning and programming process. I have recently appointed Jennifer DeBruhl to serve as Special Assistant to the Deputy Commissioner to lead this effort along with the development of Virginia's next STIP. Many of you may know Jennifer from her experience with FHWA's planning team and leadership of the Department's Urban program over the past several years. She will be assembling a multi-disciplinary team to work on this process and will be seeking your input and involvement as the team's work progresses.

A videoconference is being scheduled to discuss these issues in more detail. If you need additional information in the interim, please contact Jennifer DeBruhl at (804) 786-4293 or by email at Jennifer.DeBruhl@VDOT.virginia.gov.

Sincerely,



David S. Ekern, P.E.

C: The Honorable Pierce Homer
Mr. Roberto Fonseca-Martinez



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of Transportation

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Pierce R. Homer
Secretary of Transportation
Patrick Henry Building, 3rd Floor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Subject: **SAFETEA-LU Revisions**
Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Dear Secretary Homer:

The Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration have reviewed the information in your May 31, 2007 letter that included information related to new planning regulations related to Virginia's STIP. The letter outlines how Virginia has responded to the changes in the STIP regulations and asks for our concurrence that the STIP is SAFETEA-LU compliant.

The new USDOT transportation planning regulations, published in the Federal Register on February 14, 2007 did not dramatically change the programming process. One of the changes made pursuant to the legislation is that the STIP must cover no less than a four-year period as opposed to the previous requirement for a three-year program. This requirement applies to the Metropolitan transportation improvement programs (TIPs) as well.

In February, FHWA accepted format changes to the form VDOT uses to demonstrate fiscal constraint of the highway program and to the electronic database of STIP projects that now cover four years. At that time we requested that the out years of the program be populated with projects to show a substantial programming of anticipated Federal-aid funds. The project listing enclosed with your letter demonstrates a substantial effort in projecting Federal-aid obligations for those out years.

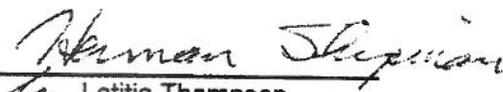
In order for the USDOT to consider a STIP to be fully SAFETEA-LU compliant, the transit portion of the program must also be revised to meet the new requirements as well. FTA is currently working with DRPT regarding their needs related to meeting SAFETEA-LU requirements; including populating the out years of the transit program to reflect anticipated funds and projects.

Regarding SAFETEA-LU compliance, we recognize that the process of formally including these new project phase starts to the TIPs will be dependent upon the processes established by each MPO and that these changes cannot be formally included into the programs by July 1, 2007. This would preclude us from formally approving a STIP amendment at this time.

We are aware of the efforts underway to better integrate Virginia's programming efforts with Federal programming requirements and that, beyond this current effort to meet the four-year requirement, a schedule is being developed for a complete TIP/STIP update based on Virginia's new six year program expected to be adopted this week.

In light of the above, we recognize that there are procedural steps that need to be completed in the transition towards full SAFETEA-LU compliance. However, we do find that VDOT is making good-faith efforts in complying with the programming requirements of SAFETEA-LU. As such we will continue our current practice of processing amendments to the STIP on a case-by-case review. Please continue to coordinate with Virginia's MPOs in the completion of their transition to meet the new requirements both in the programming and the long range planning areas.

We look forward to working with you and your staff in efforts towards improving and streamlining Virginia's transportation planning and programming process.


for Letitia Thompson
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration

Date: 6-21-07


for Roberto Fonseca-Martinez
Division Administrator
Federal Highway Administration

Date: 6/21/07

FY09 STIP Development Schedule DRAFT

June 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CTB approval of FY08-13 SYIP ▪ Transmittal of TIP addendum for FY09-10 for MPO concurrence (SAFETEA-LU compliance)
July 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide 2035 financial projections to MPOs for Constrained Long Range Plan updates
August 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Year End Obligation Authority Redistribution – FY07
September 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Federal fiscal year closeout – FY07 ▪ Initiate Fall Transportation Meetings (early public involvement for the development of the FY09 STIP)
October 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Begin preparation of obligation information for MPO FY09 TIPs (focus on non-attainment areas first) ▪ Begin federal fiscal year 2008
November 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project lists with phase starts provided to MPOs ▪ Complete Fall Transportation Meetings
December 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Air Quality Conformity analysis begins for FY09 TIPs ▪ Obligation information provided to non-attainment MPOs for TIPs. ▪ Annual list of obligations provided for public release.
January 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Air Quality Conformity approval by FHWA on TIP addendum (where applicable)
February 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Obligation information provided to attainment MPOs for TIPs
March 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare obligation information for rural areas (non-MPO)
April 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪
May 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Air Quality Conformity approval by FHWA/FTA/EPA ▪ Public Involvement for STIP (part of SYIP Public Hearings) ▪ MPOs conduct public involvement on TIPs
June 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FY09 TIPs approved by MPOs and submitted to VDOT ▪ CTB approval of FY09-14 SYIP
July 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ STIP submitted to FHWA/FTA for approval
August 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Year End Obligation Authority Redistribution – FY08
September 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FHWA/FTA approval of the STIP ▪ Post approved STIP on VDOT's website; MPOs post approved TIPs on their websites
October 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Begin federal fiscal year 2009