

May 2014 Monthly Report for MTC

To: Steve Heminger, Executive Director
From: Tom Bulger, President, GRI
Re: Monthly Report for May 2014
Date: May 28, 2014

- **EPW Approves MAP-21 Reauthorization Act (S. 2322)**
- **Tolling Amendment Scrapped in MAP-21 Reauthorization Act**
- **House Appropriations Committee Approves FY 2015 Transportation Spending Bill**
- **Bay Area Council Washington, D.C. Meetings**
- **Transportation for America Meetings**
- **TIGER 6 Grant Update**
- **White House Releases Climate Change Report**
- **Former Representative James L. Oberstar Dies at 79**
- **Meetings**

EPW Approves MAP-21 Reauthorization Act (S. 2322)

The Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee released their section of the MAP-21 (Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century) Reauthorization Act, S. 2322, late on May 12. The full Senate EPW Committee marked up the bill just three days later, on May 15 and unanimously approved it. The six-year reauthorization bill awaits the Senate's consideration.

The bill would authorize the federal highway program through FY 2020. Funding would equal the Congressional Budget Office's baseline level, which is current federal highway funding levels plus inflation. The current MAP-21 formulas would not change. The bill's proposed six-year funding levels require an additional \$100 billion above current Highway Trust Fund (HTF) revenue, yet there is no mention in the bill of where such funds should come from.

Several MTC policy goals that are not included in S. 2322:

- Allowing Interstate tolling;
- Changes to the STP sub-allocation percentages; and
- Increased role for large MPOs.

Additionally, the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Research and University Centers funding would be reauthorized, but now funded from the General Fund versus the HTF.

Several notable items included in S. 2322:

- The establishment of a formula-based freight program in FY 2016 at \$400 million, with a complex formula that will provide funds to all states for infrastructure projects in the domain of EPW;
- Flexibility to designate freight corridors beyond the Primary Freight Network;
- Establishment of a program of National & Regional Significance funded from the HTF. If enacted, this program would replace the TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) discretionary grant program;
- Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) funds authorized at \$1 billion per year, with the TIFIA project cap reduced to \$50 million;
- Environmental and project coordination and streamlining feature; and
- Maintaining metropolitan and statewide planning processes.

Tolling Amendment Scrapped in MAP-21 Reauthorization Act

Senator David Vitter (R-La.), ranking member of the Senate EPW Committee, proposed a wide reaching tolling addition to S. 2322 that ultimately failed. The amendment would have added burdensome annual reporting and notice requirements for facilities like those administered by the Bay Area Toll Authority (BATA). I worked in collaboration with Senator Tom Carper (D-Del.), the International Bridge, Tunnel and Turnpike Association (IBTTA), as well as Senator Boxer's committee staff, to ensure the proposal was rejected during Committee markup.

House Appropriations Committee Approves FY 2015 Transportation Spending Bill

On May 21, the full House Appropriations Committee reported the FY 2015 Transportation/Housing and Urban Development (HUD) spending bill. The bill is scheduled to be before the House Rules Committee on May 29 and is expected to be on the House floor in early June. Highlights of the transportation section of the bill include the following:

Federal Highways

The Committee recommended a total program level of \$40,995,000,000 for the federal highway program in FY 2015 contingent on a reauthorization bill. This is the same amount as FY 2014. Included in this amount is an obligation limitation of \$40,256,000,000 and \$739,000,000 in contract authority that is exempt from the obligation limitation.

The committee included a provision prohibiting any single state from receiving more than 20% of the TIFIA loan program's principle. The Committee also recommended \$100 million for the TIGER program.

Federal Transit

The Committee recommended an obligation limitation of \$8,595,000,000 for the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) formula programs and activities which is the same as the current fiscal year.

The Committee also recommended \$1,691,000,000 for capital investments, which is \$251,938,000 below FY 2014. It includes \$1,510,000,000 for all current Full Funding Agreements (FFGA), as requested in the President's budget, plus \$25,000,000 for a project or projects with FFGAs that will be signed by September 30, 2014. No funds are provided for new FFGAs. In addition, \$173,000,000 is provided for five small start projects proposed in the President's budget.

Federal Rail

The Committee did not recommend funding for High Speed Rail.

Bay Area Council Washington, D.C. Meetings

Once again, I participated in the Bay Area Council's annual Washington, D.C. meetings on May 19 and 20. I arranged a meeting with Peter Rogoff, the US. Department of Transportation's (DOT) Under Secretary for Policy.

Rep. John Garamendi (D-Calif.) asked to be provided additional information concerning the Marine Highway project between the Ports of Oakland and Stockton. Pertinent project information was supplied by MTC staff and transmitted to the Congressman's office.

Transportation for America Meetings

On May 13, I participated in a Transportation for America (T4America) review of the MAP-21 Reauthorization Act (S. 2322) and also attended a T4America transit financing meeting.

TIGER 6 Grant Update

On May 15, the U.S. DOT announced a total \$9.5 billion in TIGER 6 applications were received. The amount is 15 times more than the FY 2014 TIGER funding. In addition, a total of 797 applications were submitted versus 585 applications in FY 2013.

White House Releases Climate Change Report

The Obama Administration released the National Climate Assessment report in May. The report warns that global warming is already harming Americans and conditions will worsen significantly if carbon emissions are not reduced.

Former Representative James L. Oberstar dies at 79

James L. Oberstar, a Democrat who spent 36 years representing Minnesota in the House of Representatives, passed away on May 3, 2014. The longest-serving House Member in Minnesota history, Mr. Oberstar was first elected in 1975. Rep. Oberstar was a long time Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

Meetings

- Robert Edmondson, Chief of Staff for Minority Leader Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.)
- Peter Rogoff, U.S. DOT Under Secretary for Policy
- Rep. John Garamendi (D-Calif.)
- Emily Burns, Rep. Garamendi's staff
- Rep. Alan Lowenthal (D-Calif.)
- Rep. Albio Sires (D-N.J.)
- Devon Burkhardt, Senate Commerce and Transportation Committee
- Senator Tom Carper (D-Del.) and Colin Peppard
- Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) and Carl A. Seip

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