

# National Association of County Engineers



THE VOICE OF COUNTY ROAD OFFICIALS

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March 18, 2011

The Honorable Victor Mendez  
Administrator, Federal Highway Administration  
U. S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Ave., S. E.  
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Mendez:

I want to thank you for meeting with us on March 3, 2011 and your continuing interest in county engineer issues related to the use of Federal-aid dollars. I feel the discussions on our feedback from the Every Day Counts Summits were frank and sincere and went a long way to outline firsthand the issues and concerns that County Engineers are witnessing in the field.

We also appreciated your request to us to provide specifics on how we feel the use of Categorical Exclusions can be used and how you, as FHWA Administrator, could express reinforced guidance to the 52 FHWA Division Administrators to improve the Federal-aid program.

In a prior letter to you we recommended that an important role in improving processes would require active involvement, as the honest broker, of each State FHWA Division Administrator and urged the FHWA communicate to its Division Offices the need to provide accurate and consistent guidance as to the Federal-aid program and to encourage and participate with the State and local agency in cooperative and collaborative partnerships.

The attached provides what we feel would improve this program for local as well as State transportation agencies.

We remain strong supporters of your "Every Day Counts" initiative and remain committed to working with you to achieve the goals of this important initiative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phillip M. Demery". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Phillip M. Demery, P. E.  
President

## **Draft Letter from FHWA Administrator to FHWA Division Administrators**

*First, let me thank you for your continuing efforts in supporting the Every Day Counts (EDC) initiative which we launched last year. This fall we completed 10 successful EDC summits to get the word out, highlight 6 important technologies and outline several areas in which we can improve project delivery. Prior to and subsequent to the EDC summits I have had separate meetings with the individual Local Government Agency Directors, the National Association of County Engineers, and other Local Governmental Agency associations regarding their important role in improving project delivery. It must be recognized that Local Government Agencies are key partners who own 75% of our nation's public roads. I asked them what they believe will help improve our federal-aid program particularly for Local Governments. One key mentioned on many occasions was the expanded and improved use of categorical exclusions (CE) associated with improved partnerships among FHWA Division administration offices, State Aid or equivalent offices of State Transportation Agencies and Local Government Agencies and their State Association organizations.*

*In response to this concern, I issue the following guidance to be used to reduce project delivery time of federally funded projects on local and state levels. Attached is a two (2) page template that each FHWA Division Administrator shall utilize for any federal aid highway pavement preservation or rehabilitation, bridge replacement or rehabilitation, safety, sidewalk, bicycle and pedestrian project in the existing right-of-way and not requiring any additional real estate acquisition. This template was developed from samples currently used in Minnesota and Alabama in which both states have used effectively to simplify and accelerate processing time. State and local governments will comply with state and local regulations, however, this template is intended to be the only documentation required to be submitted by a state and/ or local government for FHWA to authorize the identified listed projects types.*

*Finally, I appreciate your continuing support for the EDC program. Please provide me a quarterly status report on your progress.*

*Sincerely,  
Victor Mendez, Administrator*