

REAUTHORIZATION OF SAFETEA-LU



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REQUESTED ACTION: Support a more streamlined and flexible approach to allocating federal transportation funds. Federal law should provide state, regional, and local agencies with the authority to spend federal funds for a wide range of highway, transit, local road, and bicycle/pedestrian improvements based on need. More specific actions include the following:

Streamline the Regulatory and Project Delivery Processes

- Designate California as a permanent participant in the Surface Transportation Project Delivery Pilot Program and expand the program beyond FHWA projects to include transit and air quality conformity projects.
- Support approval of CEQA-NEPA reciprocity pilot program, which would build upon California's successful implementation of the aforementioned Surface Transportation Project Delivery Pilot Program and would allow for even greater project streamlining and enhanced efficiency.
- Support streamlining of federal regulations/requirements to facilitate more expeditious project delivery. Mandate federal permitting agencies to meet the prescribed scheduled and deadlines that are specified in the environmental review process, reduce overhead, eliminate waste, and reduce documentation that is redundant with processes required under state law.
- Ensure that federal project oversight is commensurate to the amount of federal funding.

Increase Safety on Existing Transportation System

- Increase funding for safety infrastructure projects, with an emphasis on programs aimed at reducing fatalities, especially on the rural road system where fatality rates are the highest. Specifically, support and increase funding for the High Risk Rural Roads (HRRR) Program.

Protect Previous and Future Investments via System Maintenance and Preservation

- Provide increased funding for adequate maintenance and preservation of the existing local and state transportation systems, including funding for the Highway Bridge Program.

Protect and Enhance Transportation Revenues and Expenditures

- Enhance revenues, keep the Highway Trust Fund solvent, and find a long-term solution for a stable funding source. This includes support for an increase and/or index of the federal gas tax.

Improve Environmental Stewardship and Address Climate Change Concerns

- Provide incentives in current programs and/or provide new funding sources for climate change neutral or friendly transportation projects and programs, including local street and road maintenance and preservation programs.
- Provide financial incentives for rural sustainability.
- Provide financial support for regional and local planning processes, such as California's Regional Blueprint Planning Program.
- Provide assistance for data collection and determining and quantifying greenhouse gas emission sources/levels and vehicle miles traveled in order to assist local and regional agencies in efforts aimed at addressing climate change.
- Provide funding for retrofitting equipment and for alternate fuel infrastructure.

Increase State, Regional, and Local Agency Flexibility to Respond to Needs

- Maximize the use and flexibility of federal funds by not requiring minimum federal matches.
- Eliminate the need to program multiple phases for small projects.
- Eliminate need for TIP programming for air quality neutral projects.

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