



Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations **Surface Transportation Authorization Legislation Policy** **Recommendations**

1. **The reauthorization legislation should preserve all existing MPOs designated prior to the enactment of SAFETEA LU.** All MPOs play a vital role in developing current and future transportation plans and in determining transportation investments in urbanized areas. Preserving the voice of smaller (under 200k in population – 2/3 of all existing MPOs), existing MPOs is crucial to ensuring that these areas retain some authority over how their communities grow. ***Support Section 4002 in H.R. 7 - language to maintain existing MPOs. Oppose any language that would lead to the termination of existing MPOs designated prior to SAFETEA LU.***
2. **Sub-allocation of flexible funding under STP/TMP should remain at current percentages.** Metropolitan area populations have increased and will continue to grow over next 20 years. 84% of the US population lives in urbanized areas. Metropolitan areas are the economic engines of the nation, generating 90% of US GDP. Reducing dedicated, flexible federal resources to these areas will result in a nationwide transportation investment deficit in metropolitan areas, and will increase the time to implement solutions. ***Support current law suballocation of Surface Transportation Program.***
3. **Metropolitan planning funds should continue to grow with the core funding programs in the legislation.** Planning funds allow an MPO to complete critical short and long-term planning functions. In an era of urban population growth, rising complexity of technical models, use of performance measures, and increased demand upon the transportation system, now is not the time to reduce available planning funds. ***Support increased funding for MPO planning.***
4. **Maintain dedicated funding from the Highway Trust Fund for public transportation.** The Mass Transit Account represents a long-standing and critical component of the Highway Trust Fund, having served the nation's transportation network well for almost 30 years. Dedicated funds for both highway and transit programs are critical to the long-term success of our surface transportation system.
5. **The reauthorization legislation should include provisions to expedite project delivery while maintaining appropriate environmental safeguards.** Both S. 1813 and H.R. 7 include provisions to deliver transportation projects more quickly through the federal review process. H.R. 7 includes provisions that give greater weight to the range of alternatives produced in metropolitan planning and enable the metropolitan planning process to serve as the foundation for project decisions. ***Support amendment to Section 139(f) 23USC, and Section 3011 in H.R. 7 - inclusion of metropolitan planning decisions and documents in the federal environmental review process.***

6. **Preserve maximum flexibility under CMAQ with regard to improving air quality and congestion relief.** Projects selected for implementation in non-attainment or maintenance areas that improve air quality or relieve congestion should be based upon whether or not the project or program meets the underlining goals of CMAQ regardless of the project selected.
7. **New MPOs should be designated at 100,000 in population.** Raising the minimum population threshold for new MPOs, while maintaining existing smaller MPOs, provides incentives for MPOs to consolidate with neighboring MPOs to meet the new threshold. This would focus the attention and resources of the programs on metropolitan regions that have the most congestion and complex transportation challenges. *Support Metropolitan transportation planning designation in H.R. 7.*
8. **Preserve MPO decision-making authority regarding the TIP.** Development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), under current law, requires the involvement and input of transportation stakeholders and interested parties and the state. The TIP is the investment priorities of local government and the people served in the area. *Oppose TIP Modifications by Governor in H.R. 7. Support S. 1813 (g)(1)(c)(ii).*
9. **Expand projects selection authority to include NHS projects within the metropolitan planning area.** Currently MPOs over 200,000 in population select for implementation, from an approved TIP, all federally funded projects carried out within the boundaries of the metropolitan planning area excluding projects on the NHS, and under the current Interstate Maintenance program, and bridge program.
10. **Maintain current certification process and board structure for the metropolitan planning process.** Maintain the existing certification relationship between MPOs and the USDOT. Increased state oversight of the process, whether through consultation or delegation of fact finding authority, could negatively impact certification and local decision-making. *Oppose Delegation of Authority provision "134(l)(3) in Section 1201 of S. 1813*
11. **Improve freight mobility on the NHS.** Reauthorization should provide MPOs with the resources necessary to increase program capacity and ensure the safe and efficient movement of goods in and through metropolitan areas. MPOs are in need of data, funding and staff expertise in order to do truly effective freight planning.
12. **Expand the role of MPOs in the establishment and implementation of performance measures.** Establishing a performance based planning process will lead to better investments and outcomes. Given the challenging fiscal climate a move toward greater use of performance measures based on clearly defined goals and targets should be implemented. MPOs should take the lead in establishing local measures and targets. MPOs and States should work together in establishing, implementing, tracking, and reporting results and outcomes.
13. **Maintain current Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) boundaries.** Communities have clearly seen material benefit from being a part of the metropolitan transportation planning process. Provisions in S. 1813 may result in the removal of counties from the planning boundaries due to successfully complying with provisions of the Clean Air Act. *Support current law Metropolitan Planning Area Boundaries.*
14. **Support timely reimbursement of planning funds.** The current 30-day reimbursement schedule is too long in an era of electronic transactions. Timely repayment of metropolitan planning funds to MPOs ensures more effective transportation planning investments. *Support Section 1105 "(d)(2)(B) Reimbursement in S. 1813.*