



Monthly Legislative Report – February

February Advocacy Meetings

Office of Congressman Mike Levin (D-CA) – We met with Congressman Levin’s staff to discuss the request for the Water Resources Development Act of 2024 (WRDA). We also discussed Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) Appropriations Community Project Request (CPF) forms and deadlines.

Office of Congressman Lou Correa (D-CA) – We met with Congressman Correa’s staff to discuss potential FY25 CPF requests to include zero emissions buses.

Office of Congresswoman Young Kim (R-CA) – We met with Congresswoman Kim and staff to discuss FY25 CPF request guidance and the potential deadline for the office.

Office of Congresswoman Linda Sanchez (D-CA) – We met with Congresswoman Sanchez’s staff to discuss the Buy America initiative and FY25 appropriations forms and deadlines.

Office of Congresswoman Michelle Steel (R-CA) – We met with Congresswoman Steel’s staff to discuss safety and security in public transportation areas as part of the effort to prepare for the 2028 Olympics. We also discussed FY25 Appropriations request forms and deadlines.

Office of Senator Laphonza Butler (D-CA) – We met with Senator Butler’s staff to discuss the Coastal Rail Resiliency Study (CRRS). We discussed potential rail safety legislation and funding for commuter rail. We also discussed FY25 Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) Appropriations forms that have a deadline for March 12th. We also met separately to discuss the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) proposed disapproval of the South Coast Air Basin Contingency Measure State Implementation Plan for the 1997 federal ozone standard that could lead to sanctions that would impact transportation funding for the region.

Office of Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA) – We met with Senator Padilla’s staff to discuss FY25 CDS forms and deadlines. We also discussed with staff the EPA’s proposed disapproval of the South Coast Air Basin Contingency Measure State Implementation Plan for the 1997 federal ozone standard that could lead to sanctions that would impact transportation funding.

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (Majority Staff) – We met with the Committee’s Senior majority staff to discuss the status of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization. We also discussed a potential hearing regarding passenger rail issues.

Department of Transportation (DOT) Government Affairs – We met with the government affairs staff at the department to provide an update on OCTA projects. We shared a support letter for Metrolink’s grant application for the Metrolink Sustainable Locomotives Project for the United States Department of Transportation Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program.

FY24 Appropriations

The House passed a Continuing Resolution on February 29th to prevent a government shutdown by extending funding deadlines to March 8th and March 22nd, giving Congress extra time to resolve spending disagreements. The House voted 320-99 on the extension which was then agreed to 77-13 in the Senate and is headed to the President’s desk before the funding deadline of March 1st.

The new deadline for each bill is included below:

- **March 8th, 2024:**
 - Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration
 - Energy and Water Development
 - Military Construction, Veterans Affairs
 - Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies.

- **March 22nd, 2024:**
 - Commerce, Justice, Science
 - Defense
 - Financial Services and General Government
 - Homeland Security
 - Interior, Environment
 - Labor, Health and Human Services, Education
 - Legislative Branch
 - State, Foreign Operations

Other items like supplemental spending for the war in Ukraine, the conflict in Israel, and border security continue to be a focus for House Republicans and Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) during the ongoing negotiations for the remaining spending bills. However, a tentative deal has reportedly been reached and may be released soon.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Bill

On February 29th, the House voted to extend the FAA's funding until May 10 by a 401-19 vote. This marks the third extension since the FAA's last authorization expired on September 30, 2023. The House's proposal includes significant investments and safety measures, while the Senate's version focuses on accessibility, foreign aviation safety, and additional flight slots at Reagan National Airport, despite local concerns over potential delays. On February 8th the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee advanced a bill to reauthorize the FAA for five years. The bill (S. 1939) would authorize more than \$107 billion

for the FAA for fiscal years 2024 through 2028, including \$67.5 billion for operations, training, and retention of critical staff as well as \$20 billion for airport improvement grants, according to the committee.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) Opens Hazardous Material Safety Funding

The DOT Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) published multiple Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) to award \$18 million in grants through its pipeline and hazardous materials safety programs. These funding opportunities are open to states, local communities, tribal entities, universities, and non-profit organizations to support pipeline and hazardous materials safety programs across the country. Funding will be used to improve community and environmental safety through projects that train first responders, educate the public on local safety initiatives, encourage the development of new pipeline technologies, and more. More information on the program is available [HERE](#).

DOT Announces \$1.25 Billion in Grants to Improve Roadway Safety

DOT has opened the process for cities, towns, counties, Tribal governments, and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) to apply for \$1.256 billion in funding for local projects that improve roadway safety. The funds are from the competitive grant program, Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A). A non-exhaustive list of the cities and counties that meet program thresholds is available [HERE](#). The Safe Streets and Roads for All Notice of Funding Opportunity is available [HERE](#).

DOT Announces \$631 Million to Help Transit Agencies Buy New Railcars

The DOT's Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has announced \$631 million in grants to improve rail transit safety and reliability for passengers through the purchase of new American-made rail cars. The selected Rail Vehicle Replacement Program [projects](#) are:

- **Chicago, IL:** The Commuter Rail Division of the Regional Transportation Authority (METRA) will receive **\$100 million** to buy 50 modern, multi-level railcars that will feature new passenger safety, accessibility, and rider comfort amenities to replace older railcars that have been in service for more than 40 years.
- **Baltimore, MD:** The Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Transit Administration (MDOT MTA) will receive approximately **\$214 million** to buy 52 new light rail vehicles to replace older vehicles that have been in service for more than 25 years.
- **Philadelphia, PA:** The Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) will receive approximately **\$317 million** to buy up to 200 new rail cars to replace older rail cars that have been in service for nearly 25 years, operating along the Market Frankford Line, the most heavily used line in SEPTA's system.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Allocates \$1.5 Billion for Transit

On February 8th, the FTA announced \$1.5 billion in funding to support American transit vehicle manufacturing, including zero-emission buses, and facilitate bus facility construction and workforce development. The investment is aimed to replace aging buses, reduce pollution, create jobs, and improve transit reliability. More information is available [HERE](#).

New Acting FTA Administrator

On February 24th, Veronica Vanterpool took on the role of Acting Administrator for the FTA. Her tenure with the FTA began in August 2021 as a Senior Advisor, followed by 2.5 years as Deputy Administrator. For more information on Vanterpool click [HERE](#)

FTA Disaster Relief Funds

On February 5th, the FTA allocated \$110 million to aid eight public transportation providers and state Departments of Transportation in six states and a U.S. territory in recovery efforts from recent natural disasters. Facilitated through FTA's Public Transportation Emergency Relief (ER) Program the funding supports the repair of damaged equipment and facilities and covers costs incurred during evacuation and rescue operations following floods, hurricanes, and tornadoes that occurred between 2017 and 2022. More information is available [HERE](#).

FTA Public Transit Funding Announced

The FTA announced \$9.9 billion in funding on February 29th for public transit formula grants. This initial funding reflects the amount of funding available for five months (October 1, 2023 to March 1, 2024) at FY 2023 levels while the federal government operates under a Continuing Resolution. Adjustments due to the 2020 Census may change funding for some areas. More information is available [HERE](#).

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Hearing on "Buy America" Requirements

On February 15th, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Highways and Transit held a hearing to discuss the "Buy America" requirements from the 2021 infrastructure law, focusing on its impact and implementation challenges. Witnesses from various sectors highlighted the importance of these provisions for American jobs and manufacturing, while also addressing the complexities of compliance and the role of waivers in ensuring flexibility. Concerns were raised about the need for clear guidance and the potential cost implications for smaller businesses and specific industries like steel and asphalt paving. The complete hearing is available [HERE](#).

FY2024 Competitive Funding Opportunity: Buses and Bus Facilities Program

The purpose of this grant program is to assist in the financing of buses and bus facilities capital projects, including replacing, rehabilitating, purchasing, or leasing buses or related equipment, and rehabilitating, purchasing, constructing, or leasing bus-related facilities. Projects funded by this program (and the Low-No grant program) will be expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector; incorporate evidence-based climate resilience measures and features; avoid adverse environmental impacts to air or water quality, wetlands, and endangered species; and address the disproportionate negative environmental impacts of transportation on disadvantaged communities. Eligible projects including the following: Capital projects to replace, rehabilitate, purchase, or lease buses, vans, or related equipment; Rehabilitate, purchase, construct, or lease bus-related facilities regardless of propulsion type or emissions; Additionally, 0.5% of the Federal request may be used for workforce development training and an additional 0.5% may be used for training at the National Transit Institute (NTI). Note, applicants proposing any project related to zero-emission vehicles and related facilities must also spend 5% of their award on workforce development and training as outlined in their Zero-Emission Fleet Transition Plan, unless the applicant certifies that their financial need is less.

Eligible Entities: States, local governmental authorities, and Indian Tribes.

Total Program Funding Available: \$390 million.

Required Cost Sharing or Match: At least 20 percent cost match.

Application Deadlines: April 25th, 2024 at 11:59 PM EST.

FY2024 Competitive Funding Opportunity: Low- or No-Emission Program

The purpose of the Low-No Program is to support the transition of the nation's transit fleet to the lowest polluting and most energy efficient transit vehicles. The Low-No Program provides funding for the purchase or lease of zero- emission and low-emission transit buses, including acquisition, construction, and leasing of required supporting facilities such as recharging, refueling, and maintenance facilities. Eligible project types include the following: Purchasing or leasing low or no emission buses; Acquiring low or no emission buses with a leased power source; Constructing or leasing facilities and related equipment (including intelligent technology and software) for low or no emission buses; Constructing new public transportation facilities to accommodate low or no emission buses; Rehabilitating or improving existing public transportation facilities to accommodate low or no emission buses; Additionally, 0.5% of the Federal request may be used for workforce development training and an additional 0.5% may be used for training at the National Transit Institute (NTI). Note, applicants proposing any project related to zero-emission vehicles and related facilities must also spend 5% of their award on workforce development and training as outlined in their Zero-Emission Fleet Transition Plan, unless the applicant certifies that their financial need is less.

Eligible Entities: States, local governmental authorities, and Indian Tribes.

Total Program Funding Available: Approximately \$1.10 billion.

Required Cost Sharing or Match: At least 20 percent cost match.

FY23 through FY26 Bridge Investment Program: Planning and Bridge Project Grants

The DOT offers financial assistance for bridge replacement, rehabilitation, preservation, or protection. The program aims to improve bridge safety and condition and encourage non-Federal contributions from project sponsors and stakeholders.

Eligible Entities: State, County, and Local Governments, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, Federal Land Management Agency, Multi-State or Multi-Jurisdictional group and Federally recognized Indian Tribes.

Total Program Funding Available: Over four years, \$9.62 billion for Bridge Projects (and Large Bridge Projects with total eligible project costs over \$100 million and \$80 million for Planning Projects).

Required Cost Sharing or Match: 20% of cost match required.

Application Deadlines: As outlined in the NOFO, eligible applicants may apply for a Planning or Bridge Project grant for a specific fiscal year of funding at any time up to the application deadline for that fiscal year (see below). Please review NOFO for specific details about this “rolling applications” process.

- FY23-24: February 19th, 2024 (planning application) and March 19th, 2024 (bridge project application)
- FY25: October 1st, 2024 (planning application) and November 1st, 2024 (bridge project application)
- FY26: October 1st, 2025 (planning application) and November 1st, 2025 (bridge project application)