

State of Texas Border Partnership E-Newsletter

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Obama orders establishment of standards for medium- & heavy-duty trucks

President Barack Obama signed a presidential memorandum this past month directing the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to work together on a rule establishing limits on the fuel consumed and emissions produced by commercial vehicles for Model Years 2014 thru 2018.

"This is going to bring down the costs for transporting goods; serving businesses and consumers alike," Obama said. "It will reduce pollution, given that freight vehicles produce roughly one-fifth of the greenhouse-gas emissions related to transportation. We estimate, for example, that we can increase fuel economy by as much as 25% in tractor trailers using technologies that already exist today. And, just like the rule concerning cars, this standard will spur growth in the clean energy sector."

The order notes that the administration aims to issue a final rule by July 30, 2011. The federal government, in drafting that final rule, will be required to consider such factors as existing strategies and technologies for reducing fuel consumption and "market structure of the trucking industry and the unique demands of heavy-duty-vehicle applications."

Obama emphasized "the broad support behind this plan," highlighting those in attendance at the signing ceremony for the memorandum. They included U.S. Trans-

portation Secretary Ray LaHood; White House Director of Energy & Climate Change Policy Carol Browner; EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson; Rep. John Dingell, D-Michigan; Rep. Ed Markey, D-Massachusetts; Rep. Chris Van Hollen, D-Maryland; Rep. Henry Waxman, D-California; and various other representatives of car and truck manufacturers, fleet operators and drivers, and environmental groups.

Along with announcing the requirements for medium- and heavy-duty trucks, Obama also discussed a similar fuel-economy standard recently established for cars and light trucks for Model Years 2012-16 and his desire to require tougher limits thereafter. "I'm proposing we start developing right now a new and higher standard to take effect beginning 2017 so that we can make more and more progress in the years to come," he said.

Obama also noted that, in addition to fuel standards, his administration will work with public and private sectors to develop the advanced infrastructure that will be necessary for plug-in hybrids and electric vehicles. For additional information, please see the following web-link.

Source: AASHTO Journal
 URL: <http://tinyurl.com/2dr7edc>
 Date: 05/28/10



FRA announces first round of funding for high speed rail projects

The Federal Railroad Administration announced May 27 that the first \$80 million in grants for high speed rail had been delivered to states, the first funds of a multi-billion dollar federal commitment. Of the \$80 million, \$66.6 million went to Florida and will cover 30 percent of the design work for the state's proposed Orlando-to-Tampa high speed rail line. Florida was only one of two states to request funds to construct an entirely new rail line.

“The President's vision for high-speed rail will forever change the way Americans travel by offering new transportation options,” said Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood in a press release. “The grants released today are merely the very beginning of many more to follow.”

Florida

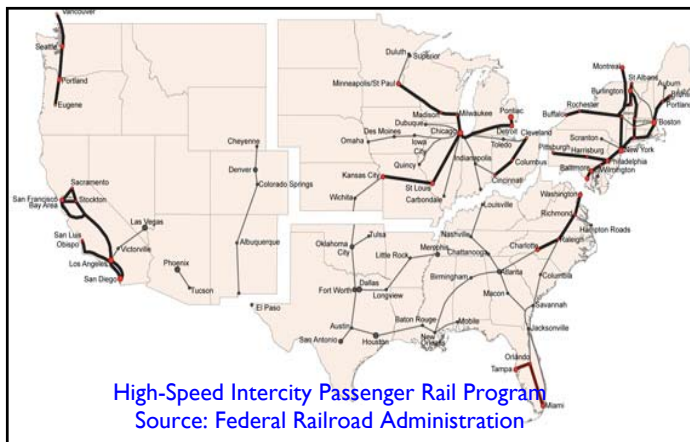
The \$66.6 million is the first of an ultimate \$1.25 billion of federal funds for construction of 84 miles of track that will link the two central Florida cities. Florida's project is funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Pub. L. No. 111-5).

In addition to covering about a third of design work, the \$66.6 million will cover public outreach efforts and will support right of way purchases for the next six months, according to the state. “All of this hard work and preparation is getting us closer to building the country's first, true high speed rail system,” said Kevin Thibault, interim executive director of the Florida Rail Enterprise in a press release. “We will eventually ask private companies to compete for the right to submit bids to build, operate and maintain the system.”

Other States

While Florida received the vast majority of this first round funding, a number of other states received funds, including:

- \$6.2 million for California's Capitol Corridor. The money will cover track relocation work for the rail line between San Francisco and Sacramento.
- \$5.7 million for Wisconsin. The money will



fund environmental assessments for new stations between Milwaukee and Madison.

- \$1 million for New York's Empire Corridor. The money will cover planning projects along the 468-mile line that links major cities in the state.
- \$100,000 for New Mexico. The money will help the state draw-up its first-ever rail plan.

The May 27 announcement is part of the Obama administration's \$8 billion of Recovery Act funds dedicated to high speed rail. The President announced the winners of the funding in late January. The administration has also requested funds for high speed rail through the appropriations process—\$1 billion a year for the next five years. Congress exceeded that request, allocating \$2.5 billion for the current fiscal year.

More on the nation's high speed rail projects can be found at <http://www.fra.dot.gov/Pages/31.shtml>

SOURCE: Federal Railroad Administration Press Release
CONTACT: Mark Paustenbach

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/2wm7wst>

DATE: 05/27/10

FHWA report projects climate impacts by region

Regional projections of climate change impacts for use by state and local transportation agencies across the United States are provided in a new report issued by the Federal Highway Administration.

The report entitled “Regional Climate Change Effects: Useful Information for Transportation Agencies” posted on the FHWA’s Highway and Climate Change website on May 25, 2010, is intended to provide the transportation community with “digestible, transparent, regional information on projected climate change effects that are most relevant to the U.S. highway system,” according to a summary.

FHWA said transportation agencies must be aware of potential climate change effects to address impacts on highway infrastructure, including weakened bridges and road beds, flooded roads, damaged pavements, and changes in weather.

“Understanding and proactively addressing the potential impacts of climate change can help avoid the potential damage, disruption in service, and safety concerns that climate change may cause,” the agency said.

FHWA said its initial research efforts “attempted to capture regional or sub-regional projections from all publicly available, peer-reviewed studies for these climate effects.” The agency said it consulted with nationally recognized climate scientists and obtained “key data sets not previously published in their entirety.” The data were evaluated and vetted with a set of regional climate experts.

“This information is designed to inform assessments of the risks and vulnerabilities facing the current transportation system, and can inform planning and project development activities,” FHWA said.

The report’s findings are presented by region, and show projected effects in 2040 to 2070, relative to a 1961 to 1979 baseline, based on averages from a low emission scenario as well as a “business as usual” emission scenario, the summary said.

The summary listed the following as some of the reports findings:

- The Northeast is projected to become substantially warmer with an annual mean increase of 3.8 to 4.8°F, and wetter, particularly during the winter months. The duration of heavy precipitation events (i.e., more than 2 inches per day) is projected to increase along with the average amount of rain falling within a given rainy day.

- The Southeast is projected to undergo a 3.2°F to 4.0°F increase in annual mean temperature, with greater warming and reduced precipitation during the summer and fall months.
- The Midwest is projected to experience an annual mean temperature increase of 4.0°F to 5.0°F, with much wetter winters and springs and drier summers.
- The Great Plains' annual mean temperature is projected to increase by 3.8 to 4.7°F, with wetter winters and drier summers.
- The Southwest is projected to experience an annual mean warming of 3.6°F to 4.5°F, with summers and falls experiencing the greatest increases. The Southwest's winters are projected to be somewhat wetter, while the spring months, in particular, are projected to be substantially drier.
- The Pacific Northwest is projected to experience an annual mean temperature increase of 3.6°F to 4.3°F, with the greatest warming and greatest reductions in precipitation projected for the summer months.
- Alaska is projected to experience the greatest warming of any U.S. region, with increases in annual mean temperature of 4.3°F, and the greatest warming expected during the winter months. Precipitation increases are projected year round, ranging from 9 percent to 17 percent, depending on the season.

Annual mean temperature on the Hawaiian Islands is projected to increase by 2.7°F to 3.3°F. Hawaii's precipitation is projected to increase during the fall months while the other seasons are projected to experience a decrease.

FHWA said the report provides the most up-to-date information available in a format that is useable for transportation agencies.

SOURCE: Federal Highway Administration

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/2ubak3c>

DATE: 05/25/10

FHWA launches congestion-tracking tool

System Developed in Conjunction with ATRI

The Federal Highway Administration announced on Wednesday, May 26th that it has launched a tool that tracks traffic chokepoints based on data from trucks.

The Freight Performance Measures (FPM) tool is a free tool designed both to help carriers move goods more efficiently and to help local governments prioritize spending needs, FHWA said.

FPM's Web-based tool, FPMweb, uses truck speeds from satellite data to measure congestion along significant freight routes. Users can access the tool at www.freightperformance.org.

FHWA said it developed the system with the [American Transportation Research Institute](#). ATRI recently released its 2009 Bottleneck Analysis, which uses FPM data to rank 100 U.S. highway bottlenecks by congestion intensity. The report also analyzes the level at

which truck-based freight was affected by traffic congestion in 2009. The worst bottleneck in the country is the I-290 interchange with I-90 and I-94 in Chicago, where the average speed at 5 p.m. drops to 15 mph. The average peak hour speed is 23 mph, and the average non-peak hour speed is only 33 mph.*

"The long-term benefit (of FPM) is getting transportation investment to focus on these bottlenecks," said Daniel Murray, vice president of research at ATRI, the research arm of the American Trucking Associations. "As an industry, we've complained for years that highways don't get their fair share (of funding)." The FPM data can help change that, he said.

SOURCE: Transport Topics Online

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/3xo5zeo>

DATE: 05/26/10

*NOTE: See ATRI 2009 Bottleneck Analysis Report at: <http://tinyurl.com/33oy6t6>

Truck tonnage rose 9.4 percent in April

The American Trucking Associations (ATA) index shows "solid, sustainable" growth in trucking demand. Truck tonnage climbed to its highest level since September 2008, the brink of the financial crisis that precipitated the recession, a trucking industry index shows.

The American Trucking Associations' For-Hire Truck Tonnage Index gained 0.9 percent in April, its sixth increase in seven months, following a 0.4 percent gain in March 2010.

Compared with April 2009, seasonally adjusted tonnage surged 9.4 percent, the fifth consecutive month of year-over-year gains and the largest increase since January 2005.

"Truck tonnage continues to improve at a solid, yet sustainable, rate, boosted by "robust manufacturing" and "stronger retail sales," said ATA Chief Economist Bob Costello.



Year-to-date, seasonally adjusted tonnage is up 6 percent compared with 2009.

SOURCE: The Journal of Commerce Online- News Story-

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/2u6aa7n>

AUTHOR: William B. Cassidy

DATE: 05/28/10

Port of Boston getting \$26 million in upgrades

BOSTON—The Port of Boston is completing \$26 million in upgrades aimed at making it a more hospitable and efficient place for cruise passengers and cargo shippers. The upgrades boost the port's ability to load and unload multiple cargo vessels and get passengers on and off cruise liners -- such as the Boston-to-Bermuda ship that turned around Friday.

"We're trying to ensure Boston remains competitive, because this is a very competitive business and the ships can go elsewhere if they can get a better deal," said Tom Kinton, chief executive officer of the Massachusetts Port Authority.

Some of the work is already done. Fresh paint and flooring at the Black Falcon Cruise Terminal is completed, as is the unglamorous -- but necessary -- reinforcement of concrete footings used by the giant lifts at the Conley Container Terminal.

The rest will be finished by September, in time for the busy fall cruise season and in anticipation of a doubling in worldwide cargo shipping by 2020. A new passenger boarding lounge is planned for the third floor at Black Falcon, as are additional elevators and a people mover for those getting off cruise ships. "Pixie-stick" lights will hang from the vaulted, exposed-beam ceiling, illuminating the floor of the new departure area. Three hundred seats will replace the folding metal chairs used now in makeshift waiting areas. And giant transom and wall windows will offer natural lighting and a look at the ships tied outside.

The Conley terminal is getting a new pair of harbor-side cranes, for six total, which will allow it to load and unload two full-size container vessels simultaneously. A cargo-tracking system will enable truckers to use the Internet to see if their container has cleared Customs and is ready to be dropped onto their trailer chassis.

Kinton said local companies rely on getting materials in Boston to keep shipping costs, and prices, lower. That has a ripple effect across the regional economy. Massport's maritime operations employ 2,200 people directly, from longshoremen and supervisors to security forces and electricians, as well as 30,000 jobs indirectly.

The port has an estimated \$450 million in annual economic impact. Boston's port has been busy since before the city's founding in 1630. Today, Massport owns, operates and leases about 500 acres in Charlestown, East Boston and South Boston.

The most prominent locations are the Black Falcon terminal in South Boston and the Conley, located across an inlet, where airliners appear to skim past Conley's soaring cranes as they fly toward Logan International Airport.

During the past decade, the number of cruise passengers in Boston has increased over 50 percent, from 198,000 in 2000 to 300,000 last year. Earlier this month, the port marked the 1 millionth cruise passenger to set sail on a Boston-originating ship.

The challenge has been moving passengers through an area originally designed for more spartan military purposes. But come September, embarking passengers will pull past the terminal, drop their bags and head up a dedicated escalator to the third-floor departure area. Meanwhile, disembarking passengers will stream directly onto the second floor to board the people mover and elevators down to a luggage pickup area.

Over at Conley, Massport is spending \$15 million to import two used cranes from Oakland, by way of the Panama Canal, to speed container loading and unloading. Currently, if a ship can't be loaded or unloaded before high tide, its captain may set sail, taking cargo that must be trucked back to Boston from ports elsewhere on the East Coast.

"I think we're going to be able to create a tremendous benefit to the New England trade community, because we can tell them, 'We can handle all your needs,'" said Massport Port Director Michael Leone.

SOURCE: The Boston Globe
URL: <http://tinyurl.com/2e8mfah>
AUTHOR: Glen Johnson- Associated Press
DATE: May 29, 2010

House members discuss reauthorization, transportation investment at CAGTC summit

A bipartisan group of eight members of Congress participated Wednesday in a Capitol Hill briefing held by the Coalition for America's Gateways & Trade Corridors (CAGTC), where freight stakeholders urged action on a comprehensive multi-year surface transportation reauthorization bill.

Rep. John Mica, R-Florida and ranking minority member of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, said he has asked T&I Chairman James Oberstar, D-Minnesota, to move forward on a bill that would reauthorize freight and surface transportation. He said Congress is unlikely to produce a bill by year's end, however, due to the complexities of finding new revenue sources to fully fund the \$500 billion measure.

"The main component is the financial piece," Mica said. "Chairman Oberstar doesn't have the votes to raise the gas tax ... and the gas tax won't work at 18 cents in the future. I propose doing away with the gas tax."

House Highways & Transit Subcommittee Chairman Peter DeFazio, D-Oregon, said \$140 billion in new revenue is needed to properly fund America's surface transportation infrastructure over the next six years.

"Private/public partnerships, an infrastructure bank -- these are fun things, but we need a substantial investment in our infrastructure system," he said.

DeFazio said transportation investment is a proven way to put Americans back to work. Congress needs to move on a surface transportation bill because it would create millions of jobs and benefit the economy, he said.

Rep. Dave Reichert, R-Washington state, said America's global competitiveness is at stake if it can't come up with a national transportation plan.

"If we don't advance together, we are going to fall behind," he said. Other members of Congress who participated in the Coalition for America's Gateways & Trade Corridors briefing included Rep. Corrine Brown, D-Florida; Rep. Bill Shuster, R-Pennsylvania; Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Oregon; Rep. Steve Cohen, D-Tennessee; and Rep. Albio Sires, D-New Jersey.

The coalition strives to bring national attention to the need to significantly expand U.S. freight transportation capabilities and to work toward solutions to this growing national challenge. Its website is available at www.tradecorridors.org.

SOURCE: AASHTO Journal

URL: <http://tinyurl.com/2aha4cy>

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Famous Quote of the Day:
 "History is a relentless master. It has no present, only the past rushing into the future. To try to hold fast is to be swept aside."

--John F. Kennedy,
 35th U.S. president

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Next Talking Freight web seminar on June 16th

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Office of Freight Management and Operations and the Office of Planning host the "Talking Freight" web seminars. These web seminars are part of a broader Freight Professional Development Program (FPD) aimed at providing technical assistance, training, tools, and information to help the freight and planning workforce meet the transportation challenges of tomorrow.

The Talking Freight seminars are held via web conference. This means that you view the PowerPoint presentations over the Internet while listening to the presenters over the telephone (or computer). The FHWA "Talking Freight" web seminars are held on the third Wednesday of each month throughout the year and are open at no cost to all interested parties in both the public and private sectors.

The next FHWA HQ's Talking Freight Seminar will be held on June 16th, and will cover the topic of "Promoting Economic Revitalization Through Enhancing Freight

Transportation." Freight-related businesses provide major economic benefits to their communities, and also provide significant benefits at the state and national level. However, those economic benefits can only be fully realized when the transportation system works in an efficient manner and can adequately support freight transportation movements. As the U.S. continues its recovery from the national and worldwide economic recession and freight transportation movements increase as a result of increased manufacturing and production, it will become increasingly critical that the transportation system has the ability to operate efficiently and help sustain the economic recovery. For additional information on registering for this web seminar, please see the following URL web-link:
<http://tinyurl.com/ycsvqjz>

SOURCE: FHWA Office of Freight Management & Operations (HOFM)

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The FHWA "Talking Freight" monthly webinar series is now eligible for AICP certification maintenance (CM) credits for AICP members through the American Planning Association. Credits can be claimed at:
<http://www.planning.org/cm/search/provider.htm?ProviderCompanyID=246167>

For additional information please contact Ms. Carol Keenan of FHWA HQ's at:
carol.keenan@dot.gov

University of Texas (UT) and TxDOT host freight stakeholder focus groups

The Center for Transportation Research (CTR) at the University of Texas (UT) and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) are conducting a study that directly pertains to freight stakeholders. As part of this study, CTR is hosting six Freight Stakeholder Focus Groups in:

- **El Paso; June 3**
 13301 Gateway West Blvd.,
 El Paso, TX, 79928
- **Tyler; June 17**
 2709 W Front Street,
 Tyler, TX 75702
- **Corpus Christi; June 24**
 1701 S Padre Island Dr.
 Corpus Christi, TX, 78416
- **Lubbock; July 15**

135 Slaton Road,
 Lubbock, TX, 79404

- **San Angelo; July 22**

4502 Knickerbocker Road,
 San Angelo, TX, 76904

- **Houston; July 29**

7600 Washington Avenue, Houston, TX, 77007 For additional information, please contact Ms. Jolanda Prozzi, CTR at jpprozzi@mail.utexas.edu or by telephone at 512-232-3079

The objectives of these six freight stakeholder focus groups are to:

- a) share information collected regarding freight trends observed;
- b) discuss any needs, issues, and bottlenecks pertaining to the freight transportation system;
- c) identify any needed infrastructure improvements; and
- d) explore policies, strategies, and performance measures that TxDOT can consider for implementation.