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FEDERAL HIGHWAY
ADMINISTRATION
TEXAS DIVISION

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State of Texas Border Partnership E-Newsletter

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Durbin opens door to supporting fuel-tax increase; revenue key to moving house bill

A key senator said this week that he wants to see a transportation authorization bill completed by early next year and that raising the federal motor-fuels tax to pay for it must be considered by Congress.

"We have to pay for it, and paying for it may mean an increase in the federal gas tax," Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin, D-IL, said Monday at a Tri-State Development Summit in Fairfield, IA. "Nobody wants to say those words. I've said them to you because unless we're honest about this, we're not going to see a federal highway bill." Durbin told reporters that a consensus must be reached between business, labor, and community leaders to support a fuel-tax increase "to stimulate new job creation in America," the [Quincy Herald-Whig reported](#).

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, the American Trucking Associations, and the motor club AAA in September called on Congress to swiftly enact a multiyear surface transportation authorization measure and to fully fund it by increasing the gasoline and diesel taxes that support the Highway Trust Fund. Durbin's comments put him at odds with the Obama administration, however, which has asked for an 18-month extension of the previous transportation authorization law to give Congress more time to work out the details and funding arrangement for a new long-term bill.

Three Senate committees have approved an 18-month extension, but no action has yet been taken on the Senate floor. The Senate late last month approved a House bill continuing government appropriations and transportation authorization until Oct. 31. Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-IA and ranking minority member of the Senate Finance Committee, which would have to approve any gas-tax hike as part of the next transportation authorization legislation, also attended Monday's summit. Grassley said that in the long term, the United States might need to rely on more than fuel taxes to cover the costs of highways and other transportation infrastructure. He

expressed a desire to see the next transportation measure trim the number of federal program categories. Separately this week, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee said he won't proceed with a plan to finance a \$500 billion transportation authorization bill proposed by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee until he is convinced his colleagues have the will to pay for it.

Rep. Charles Rangel, D-NY, said Wednesday he will only take up a revenue-producing plan for the measure sponsored by T&I Chairman James Oberstar, D-MN, if he knows it has the votes to pass, CQ Today reported. "Everyone is excited about a robust transportation bill," Rangel said. "The enthusiasm is out there." However, Rangel added, "We have not concluded that everyone is willing to pay for it and call it an emergency."

At a House Democratic Caucus meeting Tuesday, Oberstar reportedly made an impassioned plea for colleagues to support the surface transportation bill to boost economic recovery. He said states have identified about 8,000 projects that could be started immediately if the money were available. That's in addition to more than 8,000 projects already obligated using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding.

Some members of Congress have been floating the idea of another stimulus to create more jobs. Rangel said that after healthcare, the priority is to deal with unemployment. Oberstar has rejected any compromise that might add more money to the Highway Trust Fund as part of a short-term extension, holding firm to his support for a full six-year authorization. "That's piecemeal," Oberstar said of the administration and Senate's desire to postpone a larger authorization measure until Spring 2011. "This is the future stimulus. We need a long-term investment."

Source: AASHTO Journal
URL Source: <http://www.aashtojournal.org/Pages/101609funding.aspx>
Date: 10/16/09

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CN to purchase 70 locomotives from GE, EMD

The Canadian Northern (CN) railroad recently placed orders for 70 new high-horsepower locomotives with GE Transportation and Electro-Motive Diesel Inc. (EMD).

The Class I plans to acquire 35 ES44DC 4,400-horsepower locomotives from GE beginning in fourth-quarter 2010 and 35 SD70M-2 4,350-horsepower units from EMD starting in January 2011.

The motive-power orders are part of CN's multi-year locomotive-renewal program aimed at increasing fuel efficiency, improving service reliability and reducing greenhouse-gas emissions. The new units are designed to cut fuel usage 15 percent to 20 percent and reduce air emissions compared with conventional locomotives.

The new GE and EMD locomotives also will be equipped with distributed power (DP) capability to provide faster and smoother train starts, improve braking and reduce pulling forces at a train's head-end, CN officials said in a prepared statement.



URL Source: <http://www.cn.ca/en/media-news-new-locomotives-20091021.htm>

Date: 10/21/09

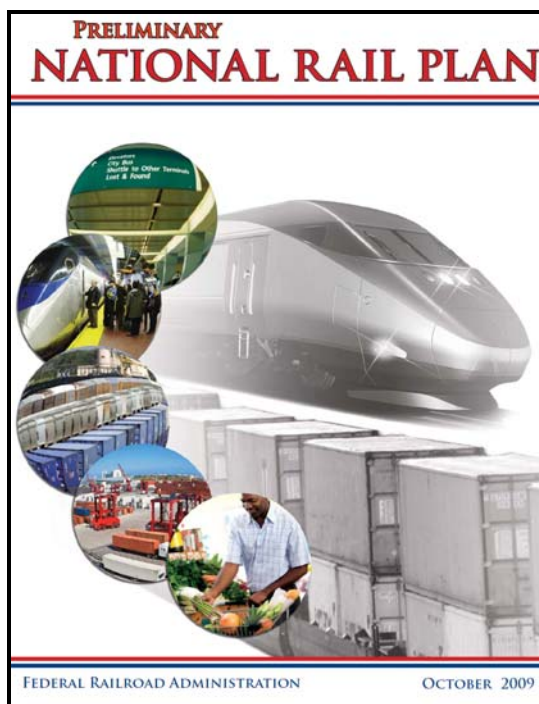
FRA forges preliminary 'National Rail Plan'

On Friday, October 16th the [Federal Railroad Administration \(FRA\)](#) released a preliminary **National Rail Plan (NRP)** aimed at formulating a strategy to address the nation's rail needs. The Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 passed by Congress directed the FRA to develop a NRP.

The preliminary plan directs the FRA to provide assistance to states in developing their rail plans to ensure that the federal long-range NRP is consistent with approved state rail plans. In addition, the plan sets the framework for the development of high-speed rail in the United States and the development of policies to improve the nation's transportation system.

"Today, rail is part of a complex national system for the movement of people and goods. Passenger and freight transportation are closely interlinked in that people and goods use the same infrastructure for transportation by highway and rail," FRA officials said in a preliminary NRP summary. "Therefore, a National Rail Plan must be developed with an awareness of the transportation needs and demands of both passengers and freight."

The FRA plans to develop strategies that exploit the strengths inherent in each transportation mode, and leverage those strengths to improve U.S. transportation as a whole.



"Although this preliminary plan does not generally offer specific recommendations, it identifies a number of issues that this agency believes should be considered in formulating the NRP," FRA officials said in the summary. "In short, it is designed to create a springboard for further discussion." The FRA is soliciting input from states, freight railroads and other transportation stakeholders to help develop a NRP.

Source: Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)

URL Source:

www.fra.dot.gov and click on "Preliminary Rail Plan"

Date: 10/19/09

Highway contractors, enviros strike deal on clean diesel

The construction industry urged Congress on October 15th to let states mandate the use of clean-diesel equipment for federally funded highway construction.

The Associated General Contractors of America joined the Clean Air Task Force in urging lawmakers to include the change in the next highway and transit bill that will serve as the de facto national transportation strategy for several years.

The groups want the new legislation to authorize states to require diesel emissions reductions at construction sites and to cover the cost of retrofitting or repowering equipment manufactured to meet earlier emissions standards.

The proposal would not alter the bidding process for contractors hoping to land federally funded transportation projects, and any additional costs of the emissions-savings measures would be covered by federal funding.

"If the federal transportation program can connect a continent and unite a people, there's no reason it can't help protect our environment," said Stephen Sandherr, AGC's chief executive. "This approach will reduce emissions without imposing crippling new costs that will hurt construction firms and their workers."

Under the plan, states would first require contractors who successfully bid for a project to identify the off-road diesel equipment they plan to use during the construction process. States would then consider a U.S. EPA-approved measure for cutting emissions from the equipment and issue orders to the contractors requiring that they pursue the best of the emissions-reducing options.

Federal funds to reimburse contractors for any increased costs they incur would come from either an existing federal air-quality program, the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program or from elsewhere in the transportation bill. Lawmakers provided states with \$8.6 billion over the last four years through the mitigation program, which was created in the 1991 highway bill. The group's proposal would also require EPA and the Transportation Department to provide a streamlined formula and process to allow

states to quantify the emission reductions achieved through the changes to the construction equipment.

The nonprofit Clean Air Task Force, which has been pressing for the cleanup of diesel engines, said the support of AGC would be key to its lobbying efforts. "We are thrilled to be standing side by side with contractors on this," said Conrad Schneider, the group's advocacy director.

"This is a great opportunity to clean up many of the millions of older diesel engines still in use."

The current highway law was set to expire at the end of September, but lawmakers extended it by one month as part of a larger bill continuing spending levels for a number of federal programs.

House leaders are hoping to pass the next multiyear bill before the end of 2009, but the Senate and the White House instead want to see an 18-month extension of the current program to buy more time to consider what is expected to be a reform-minded bill.

The House effort, authored by Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman James Oberstar (D-Minn.), would streamline DOT, cutting more than 75 federal programs and consolidating highway funding under four core formula categories: critical asset investment, highway safety improvement, surface transportation, and congestion mitigation and air quality improvement.

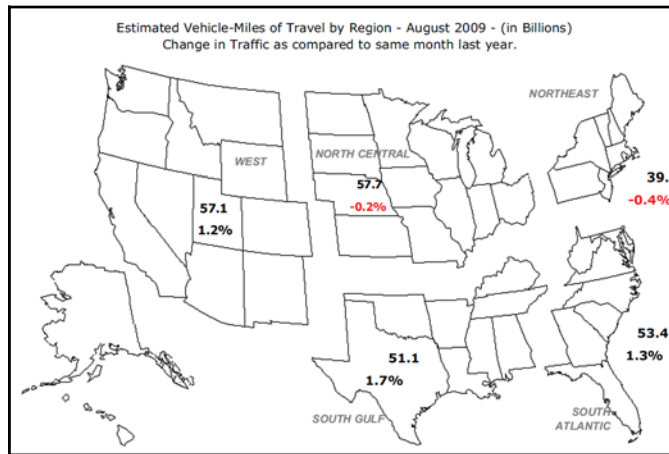
URL Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/gwire/2009/10/15/15greenwire-highway-contractors-enviros-strike-deal-on-clean-diesel.html>

Date: 10/15/09

Traffic volume trends in the U.S. increase by 0.7%

Based upon the FHWA Travel Volume Trends Report for August 2009, vehicle travel on all roads and streets increased by **+0.7% nationwide** (1.9 billion vehicle miles) for August 2009 as compared with August 2008. Travel for the month of August is estimated to be 259.0 billion vehicle miles.

The graphic on the right shows percent travel volume increases (or decreases) are shown based upon a network of continuous volume counters located within States across the U.S. Slight volume decreases are shown in red for the North Central and the North Eastern regions of the country. A copy of the FHWA Travel Volume Trends report may be downloaded from the FHWA Office of Highway Policy Information's website at: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/tvtw/09augvt/09augvt.pdf>



Source: FHWA Office of Highway Policy Information, October 2009.

DOT freight index shows second straight monthly gain

The U.S. Department of Transportation's freight transportation services index fell in August 2009 from a year ago but showed a second straight month-to-month improvement, DOT said on October 15th.

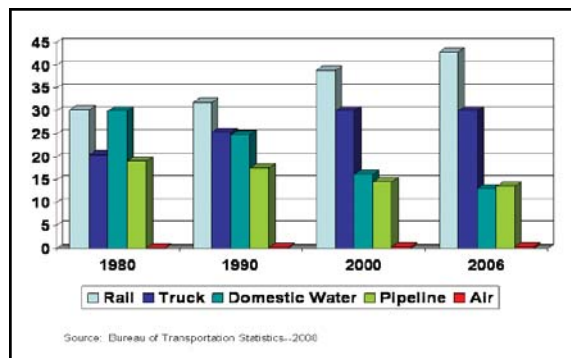
The 10.9% decline in the freight index from August 2008 was the largest August-to-August decline in the 20 years in which the TSI has been calculated, but it rose 0.7% from July, following July's 1.6% gain from June.

The index has now gone four consecutive months without a monthly downturn after declining in nine of the previous 12 months, marking the first four-month period without a decline since 2002, DOT said.

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said in a statement that the monthly improvement is "evidence that America is moving towards economic recovery" and that "economic data like this should give us hope that our worst days are behind us."

The freight TSI is 14.8% below its historic peak of 112.9 set in May 2006, with the year 2000 as a base-line level of 100.

August's 96.2 reading is a 2.7% increase from the recent low of 93.6 in April,



when the index was at its lowest level in 12 years.

The freight TSI is a seasonally adjusted monthly index measuring the output of services provided by the for-hire transportation industries, including railroad, air, truck, inland waterways, pipeline and local transit.

Source: Transport Topics On-Line News
 URL Source: <http://www.ttnews.com/articles/basetemplate.aspx?storyid=22963>
 Date: 10/15/09

Arizona stands to gain from seaport in Mexico

Arizona's ports could become a lot busier if Mexico follows through on plans to expand some ports, such as Guaymas, and to build a large seaport at Punta Colonet, which is on Mexico's Baja Peninsula about 150 miles south of Tijuana.

The Mexican government announced plans in March 2008 to start accepting bids for a \$4 billion seaport that would link the Pacific Ocean to the United States and give shippers an alternative to the congested ports in Los Angeles and Long Beach in California.

Arizona officials perked up, because depending where roads and railroads were built from the port, much of the goods could be headed to and through the state. The project was put on hold because of the recession and reportedly is out for bid again, said Marisa Walker, executive director of the CANAMEX Corridor Task Force.

The CANAMEX Corridor Task Force has contracted with Wilbur Smith Associates of Columbia, S.C., to study what opportunities Arizona could get. A lot of the impact will depend on where any roads and railroads built from the port would lead.

Arizona obviously has a competitive advantage in that list of possible crossings because of its proximity to the Punta Colonet location," Walker said.

But the state wants to make sure that it can flush out opportunities.

"We tend to do a real good job of carrying a lot of Asian goods and international traffic on our highways and railroads. But we don't necessarily get commensurate benefits," Walker said.

Source: **The Arizona Republic**
URL: <http://www.azcentral.com/business/articles/2009/10/21/20091021biz-border1022side.html>
Date: 10/21/09

'Port Tracker' report: container volume at major U.S. ports shows steady, but slight rise

The forecast for import cargo volume at the nation's major container ports just got a tad rosier. The National Retail Federation (NRF) and IHS Global Insight now expect volume to total 12.7 million TEUs, according to their latest monthly "Port Tracker" report. In September, the organizations predicted year-end volume of 12.5 million 20-foot equivalent units (TEUs) after projecting 12.3 million units in August.

"As we move closer to the end of the year and get updated numbers, we're seeing a steady improvement with year-over-year declines becoming smaller," said NRF Vice President for Supply Chain and Customs Policy Jonathan Gold in a prepared statement. "Retailers are slowly starting to import more merchandise, and that's a positive sign."

The latest projection of 12.7 million TEUs would represent a 16.8 percent drop from 2008's import cargo volume at ports in Los Angeles, Long Beach and Oakland, Calif.; Seattle and Tacoma, Wash.; New York and New Jersey; Hampton Roads, Va.; Charleston,

S.C.; Savannah, Ga.; and Houston. Volume also would fall to its lowest level since 2004.

September volume was estimated at 1.14 million TEU, down 16 percent year over year, according to Port Tracker. NRF and IHS Global Insight project October volume at 1.17 million TEUs, which would represent a 15 percent decline. Volume then would fall 11 percent in November to 1.09 million TEUs and remain flat in December at 1.06 million TEUs.

In January, volume is forecasted to total 1.03 million TEUs, which would represent a 3 percent year-over-year decline vs. an 18 percent drop expected a month ago, NRF and IHS Global Insight said.

Source: **Logistics Management (Summary of Article)** URL Site: http://www.logisticsmgmt.com/article/365991-Ocean_shipping_global_logistics_Port_Tracker_report_calls_for_12_7_million_TEU_for_2009_retail_import_cargo_volume.php
Date: 10/21/09

NARC releases goods movement resource manual

Highlights Positive Public and Private Sector Relationships

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) released its [*Building Planning Capacity Between Public and Private Sector Partners in the Freight Industry: A Resource Manual*](#) on October 22, 2009.

Working in collaboration with the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) and the Association of American Railroads (AAR), this report provides information on the challenges that face regional transportation planners and their private sector counterparts in addressing goods movement, as well as examples of positive solutions to meeting those challenges.

The document includes case studies, scholarly resources and information metropolitan planning organizations addressing goods movement in a formalized manner. "The *Freight Resource Manual* provides positive opportunities for the public and private sector alike to address goods movement concerns on the regional level," said NARC President Stephen Cassano, Selectman, Town of Manchester, CT. "NARC and its Association partners have taken a much needed step forward to develop the tools for goods movement stakeholders to succeed in developing collaborative partnerships." In cooperation with the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), NARC, AAPA and AAR

assembled experts from their respective fields and identified three of the main barriers inhibiting the abilities of public and private sector freight stakeholders to comprehensively plan for the future of goods movement in their regions. The areas on which the partners focused include:

- The need for improved integration of freight stakeholders.
- The need for quality, localized data.
- The need for greater financing opportunities.

The *Freight Resource Manual* has been well received by the U.S. Department of Transportation, AAPA, AAR and various stakeholders in the goods movement field. NARC intends to use this document to provide another tool for transportation planners to use in their efforts to better accommodate transportation role in their regions.

Source: National Association of Regional Councils- Click on the following URL to download a copy of the Freight Resources Manual: http://narc.org/uploads/freightresourcesmanual_final.pdf
Date: 10/22/09

Millions more for cargo screening

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will spend \$88 million in Economic Recovery Act funds on scanning technology that will be used to inspect commercial goods crossing U.S. borders.

The funds will contribute to eight contracts for nonintrusive inspection equipment that provide fixed and mobile detection capabilities for deployment at and between ports of entry by Customs and Border Control. Similar equipment already is used to screen all rail traffic headed southbound to Mexico.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act ("Recovery Act") allocated almost \$1 billion to CBP and the General Services Administration for port and border security projects, with \$100 million dedicated to NII technologies, according to a recent press release from DHS.

URL Source: [http://](http://techinsider.nextgov.com/2009/10/dhs_invests_millions_more_in_cargo_screening.php)

[techinsider.nextgov.com/2009/10/](http://techinsider.nextgov.com/2009/10/dhs_invests_millions_more_in_cargo_screening.php)

[dhs_invests_millions_more_in_cargo_screening.php](http://techinsider.nextgov.com/2009/10/dhs_invests_millions_more_in_cargo_screening.php)

Date: 10/14/09

DHS Launches 'Southwest Border Violence' Initiative

In March 2009 the DHS Secretary Napolitano launched the Southwest Border Violence Initiative to combat drug cartel violence along the border through enhanced information sharing, stronger engagement with federal, state, and local law enforcement, increased manpower and technology, and more robust screening at the border. For information on the DHS Southwest Border Violence Initiative, please see the following website for additional information: http://www.dhs.gov/xabout/gc_1240606351110.shtm

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Famous Quote of the Day:

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."



—Sir Winston Churchill, British statesman (1874-1965)

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Information provided is a compilation from other news and on-line media sources, any information relayed is based upon the accuracy of the information provided by other news gathering organizations and does not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the Federal Highway Administration or the State of Texas Border Partnership Working Group.

Talking Freight Web Seminar on November 18th

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 FHWA "Talking Freight" web seminars are held on a monthly basis 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 November 18th from 12-1:30 PM (CST) and will cover the topic of "Security and System Resiliency." To register for this free web seminar, please go to <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/freightplanning/registration.htm> and click on the seminar topic. In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the U.S. government

began building a new multimodal approach to cargo security. The freight transportation industry continues to face unprecedented challenges from new security directives, such as TWIC and 10+2, designed to make the movement of goods more secure and safe from terrorist attacks.

Hear how security directives are impacting performance of the freight transportation system and what is needed to recover from a system disruption. Find out more by logging into this free webinar on Wednesday, November 18th.

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.

Safe driver campaign strives to reduce truck crashes

The Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance (CVSA) joined highway safety partners including the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration and AASHTO to hold an "Operation Safe Driver" campaign during mid-October 2009 to reduce fatal collisions involving heavy vehicles.

In 2008, one out of nine traffic fatalities involved a collision with a large truck, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Though 11 percent of fatalities involved large trucks, these vehicles comprised only 4 percent of registered vehicles and 7 percent of the total miles traveled in the United States. The campaign, which began in

2007, builds upon other programs such as Smooth Operator to emphasize the need for drivers of commercial vehicles and of passenger vehicles to drive safely.

For information, on the CVSA program please see: www.operationsafedriver.com. URL Source: http://www.cvsa.org/programs/op_safe_driver.aspx

For additional safety statistics, please see: <http://www.cvsa.org/programs/documents/osd/DidYouKnow.docx>
Date: 10/16/09

