

## **MnDOT Comments on the 2020 House INVEST Surface Transportation Reauthorization bill**

MnDOT supports this 2020 Federal multi-year surface transportation bill that continues to fund rail and freight programs, in addition to highway and mass transit programs. This reauthorization of programs maintains the federal-state partnership and adds a carbon pollution reduction program and a pre-disaster mitigation program. Listed below are specific aspects of the bill that we support.

### 1. Highways

- Support the 100% obligation of Federal highway formula funds in FY2021.
- The new national bridge improvement goals and new requirement that each state must obligate no less than 20 percent of its cumulative annual NHPP and STP apportionment should not affect our programming.
- Support reinstatement of a national greenhouse gas measure and the new Greenhouse Gas emission reduction program, which will fund highway or mass transit projects with the objective of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Support new Resiliency program: Funding: \$6.3 billion over 5 years - Eligibilities include construction activities to increase the resilience of highway or mass transit facilities to withstand natural disasters, relocate or provide reasonable alternatives to repeatedly damaged facilities, or upgrade (or relocate) evacuation routes.
- Support new grant program that builds on the current FHWA Alternative Fuels Corridor mapping program for two of the alternative fuels in view: electric and hydrogen.
- Maintain current performance measure and target requirements with no changes during the first performance cycle. Provide resources for continued study of transportation performance access/accessibility measures. More research is needed in this area before the establishment of a single performance measure.

### 2. Mass Transit

- Support the significant increase in federal funding for transit formula programs. This legislation increases bus funding by 150 percent.
- Support the establishment of new flexible Federal rules for Mobility on Demand that integrate new technologies with transit as the backbone. This is forward looking and consistent with initiatives that MnDOT is pursuing.
- Support the proposed increase investment in zero-emission buses to reduce carbon pollution. This is consistent with statewide objectives.
- Safe Routes to School Continues to be an eligible expense for the Transportation Alternatives Program and Highway Safety Improvement Program. This supports implementation of the MN Safe Routes to School Strategic Plan.

- The proposed active transportation grant program prioritizes destination within communities, including schools work places, residences, businesses, and recreation areas. This priority supports goals in the state bike plan (related to investments within communities) and Minnesota Walks (identified priority destination and land use contexts).

### 3. Rail

- Support the development of a standalone railway crossing grant funding program. Support the removal of 10% cap on railroads contribution to project costs as this may result in increases to private match invested in passenger rail projects that better leverages public funds. Support the allowance of Rail Crossing Program funds to support CRISI projects as a source of matching funds.
- Support the Carbon reduction funding that requires intercity rail projects demonstrate reduction of Single Occupant vehicle trips.
- Support for the significant boost of funding (324%) over the 2021 program amount for CRISI funds through 2025.
- Support the combining several existing grant programs into the Passenger Rail Improvement and Expansion (PRIME) fund for passenger rail development as these additional federal program dollars could prove extremely timely as we move toward implementation of TCMC, NLX and potentially a Northstar Extension.
- Support the preferential access of Amtrak on freight owned corridors as a fundamental tenet of the railroads disinvestment in passenger rail dating to the formation of Amtrak. STB will now have a process for evaluating what additional investment are necessary to operate additional trains over rail lines.

### 4. Freight

- Support of the continuation of the National Highway Freight Program as identified in the proposed funding levels through 2025.
- Support the expansion of additional mileage on critical urban and rural freight corridors. We request additional flexibility in the designation of multimodal freight infrastructure assets as part of the National Multimodal Freight Network (NMFN) as identified in the National Freight Plan.
- The Commercial Motor Vehicle Parking Grants should not be removed or diverted from the federal HSIP program as proposed under other draft federal legislation, but made available in addition to existing funding levels. Future policy discussions across the aisle must note that the needs for commercial vehicle safety far outstrip the existing funding levels within the HSIP program itself. Continued funding for the National Coalition on Truck Parking should be included as part of this section.
- Support the funding of a new multimodal Freight Cooperative Research Program.

- Specific requirements for the state freight plans should be allowed to be addressed through other statewide plans if an eligible plan already exists to cover topics identified in this item.
- Support the addition of large ports (\$1B annual cargo value) to the National Multimodal Freight network.

5. Connected Automated Vehicles

- Support the requirement that transit agencies have to develop plans on how AV will impact transit workers. We believe the greatest barrier to implementation at this time is mitigating labor and workforce concerns about job displacement.
- Support the additional \$20 million in funding to University Transportation Centers with a new focus on transit, CAV, bike and pedestrian safety, workforce, and climate change.
- Support the study of safe interactions between AVs and road users, which requires US DOT to study by 2022 how SAE levels 3-5 AVs will interact with road users, including cyclists and pedestrians by developing a report and road user working group, doing public awareness, and recommending planning and road design improvements. Finally, it creates a working group representing state DOTs on the topic: MnDOT would be interested in participating.