

DRIVE ACT - DEVELOPING A RELIABLE AND INNOVATIVE VISION FOR THE ECONOMY ACT

DRIVE Act provides six-years of funding, giving state and local governments the certainty, flexibility, and stability they need to improve and develop our nation's transportation infrastructure.

Highlights of the legislation include:

- Long-term funding certainty for state and local governments to support multi-year transportation project investments;
- Prioritizing funding for existing core transportation formula programs to provide states and local governments with a strong federal partner;
- Prioritizing the Interstate System, the National Highway System, and bridges at risk of funding shortfalls;
- Creation of a new multi-billion dollar per year freight program to help states deliver projects that promote the safe, efficient, and reliable transportation of consumer goods and products that is on top of the existing formula programs;
- Greater efficiency in environmental review and project delivery process through improved collaboration, deadlines, and reduced duplication;
- Greater transparency on the use of federal funds to show taxpayers where their infrastructure dollars are being spent and reinforce public trust; and
- Support for innovative financing tools that allow state and local governments to leverage federal funds for transportation projects and maximize investments, particularly in rural areas.

Authorizations and Programs

Supports for core formula programs

- The bill reauthorizes the Federal-aid highway program and maintains formula program structure and increases the amounts each state will receive each fiscal year.
- The existing consolidated core highway program structure is maintained, including: the National Highway Performance Program; the Highway Safety Improvement Program; the Surface Transportation Program; and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program.

Prioritizes bridges and large, nationally-important facilities

- The bill dramatically increases the funding to maintain and repair bridges off of the National Highway System, as these bridges often struggle to find a reliable funding stream.
- The bill also shifts additional revenue towards the Interstate System and the National Highway System to address the significant maintenance backlog on those facilities.

Provides dedicated funding to focus on freight and goods movement

- The bill establishes a formula-based freight program, which will provide funds to all states to improve goods movement, reducing costs and improving performance for business.
- It expands flexibility for both rural and urban areas to designate key freight corridors that match regional goods movement on roads beyond the Primary Highway Freight System.
- The legislation improves efforts to identify projects with a high return on investment through state freight plans and advisory committees established under MAP-21.

Funds major projects

- The bill provides funds to major projects of high importance to a community, a region, or the nation through a competitive grant program.
- The program includes a set-aside for rural areas and ensures an equitable geographic distribution of funds.

Extends user fee to electric vehicles

- As ownership of electric and alternatively fueled vehicles continues to constitute a larger percentage of users, this bill ensures all motorists pay their fair share.

Requires Highway Trust Fund transparency

- The legislation includes new provisions to improve the transparency of how and where transportation projects are selected and funded, to ensure that stakeholders and the public have faith in the integrity of highway programs and the use of federal tax dollars.
- The improved transparency provisions will provide to the public better accountability on how the Federal Highway Administration is utilizing their administrative expenses as well as progress towards achieving national goals and improving federal reviews of highway projects.

Improves TIFIA program

- The bill updates the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program and provides state and local government's new options for stretching transportation dollars and increasing efficiency and utilization.
- The bill also improves the process whereby a TIFIA loan can be used to capitalize a State Infrastructure Bank, providing increased leverage for small, rural projects that was previously unavailable.
- Accelerates project delivery and increases flexibility
- Building on the reforms in MAP-21, the bill continues to accelerate the project delivery process while protecting the environment and public health.
- New reforms would improve collaboration between the lead agency and the participating agencies, allow for greater reliance on documents prepared during the planning process, and reduce duplication between agencies involved in the federal environmental review and permitting process.

Funds Rural Areas, Federal Lands, and Tribal Transportation Highway Programs

- The bill empowers states to work with DOT to develop ways to effectively utilize flexibilities for small projects, with new options to bundle rural road and bridge projects to increase efficiencies and better respond to community needs
- The bill prioritizes funding levels for these programs to support maintenance and construction of roads and bridges on tribal and federal lands.
- The bill also authorizes funds for nationally significant federal lands and tribal transportation projects, recognizing that there is a significant maintenance and repair backlog on these facilities.

Maintains State and Metropolitan Transportation Planning

- The bill maintains the statewide and metropolitan planning processes to continue the development towards a performance-based approach to transportation decision making.

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