



NEWS RELEASE

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Counties applaud long-term surface transportation bill

Bill contains key wins for county infrastructure

WASHINGTON, D.C. – After focusing advocacy efforts for several years on securing long-term surface transportation legislation, the National Association of Counties ([NACo](http://naco.org)) today praised Congress for its bipartisan bill to increase federal transportation investments in county-owned infrastructure and support local decision-making. The Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) bill is a fully-funded, five-year reauthorization of federal highway, transit, safety and passenger rail programs.

“We applaud Congress for working with counties to reach a bipartisan agreement that will provide us with the certainty necessary to plan, fund and deliver transformative transportation projects,” said NACo President Sallie Clark. “Counties play a vital role in America’s transportation system, and the FAST Act invests in local efforts to strengthen the nation’s infrastructure for years to come.”

Significant victories in the FAST Act include:

- **Long-term Certainty:** Stopgap measures have hindered counties’ ability to make major transportation investments. The five-year plan provides the needed long-term certainty to make progress for America’s transportation system.
- **Funding for Locally-Owned Infrastructure:** The FAST Act increases the amount of funding available for locally-owned infrastructure by increasing funding for the Surface Transportation Program and making an additional \$116 billion available for county-owned highway bridges. This additional funding more than repairs the 30-percent decrease in funding that occurred under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, or MAP-21.
- **Local Decision-making:** The FAST Act leverages the value of local decision-making by sub-allocating a greater share – \$28 billion – of Surface Transportation Program funding to local areas and local governments.
- **Off-System Bridges:** The FAST Act protects set-aside funding for off-system bridges, which provides more than \$776 million annually for bridges that are primarily owned by counties and other local governments.
- **Funding for Rural and Urban Public Transportation Systems:** The FAST Act continues funding for urban and rural public transportation formula grants. In addition, the bill increases funding for the Bus and Bus Facilities formula grant program and creates additional competitive bus grant programs that will provide discretionary funding to further support counties’ bus purchases and bus facility investments.

Counties play an essential role in transportation and infrastructure. Investing over \$100 billion each year in roads, bridges, transit, water systems and other public facilities, counties facilitate everything from Americans' daily commutes to the shipping of goods around the globe.

"Our partners on Capitol Hill have heard our call to stop kicking the can down the road," said NACo Transportation Steering Committee Chair Peter McLaughlin. "No great nation has ever succeeded by building its infrastructure six months at a time, and we are grateful to have a long-term bill that gives us the green light to make progress on major transportation priorities."

Clark added, "As the owners, investors and managers of the greatest portion of the nation's transportation infrastructure, counties welcome the FAST Act and look forward to continuing to work with our federal partners to make long-overdue investments in America's transportation system."

Counties own and maintain the greatest share of the nation's road miles, or 45 percent (compared to the 32 percent of public roads owned by cities and townships; 19 percent by states; and 3 percent by the federal government) and more than 230,000 bridges (nearly 40 percent of the National Bridge Inventory). Counties are also stewards of nearly a third of the nation's transit systems and airports that connect residents, communities and businesses.

In 2013, NACo launched a major advocacy campaign to fight for county transportation priorities at the federal level. To view NACo's video highlighting why federal transportation policies matter to counties, click [here](#). For more information about NACo's transportation advocacy, click [here](#).

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The [National Association of Counties](#) (NACo) unites America's 3,069 county governments. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials to gether to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public's understanding of county government and exercise exemplary leadership in public service. More information at: www.naco.org.