



2013

FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

OVERVIEW

The Missouri Public Transit Association (MPTA) represents all public transit in the State of Missouri. Missouri public transit serves customers in every Missouri County – rural and urban - and is crucial to meeting the transportation needs of Missouri citizens. Federal programs and appropriations are an essential element in Missouri public transit service.

All Missouri public transit providers share an overriding concern relating to federal transit programs and the continuation of current service: replacement of transit vehicles – particularly buses - that are now in daily use. In the past much of this replacement need was addressed through congressionally mandated targeted appropriations. Since the Congress has moved away from such targeted appropriations, it is critical that future authorization legislation and appropriations address Missouri's public transit fleet replacement needs.

New Surface Transportation Authorization Legislation to Replace Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)

MPTA supports the passage of a new five year Federal Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act to replace and significantly restructure authorization levels currently provided in the two-year MAP-21 legislation. The new reauthorization legislation should be structured to provide a degree of funding authorization that will appropriately distribute funds to address future public transit needs at all levels – large and small, urban and rural. Examples include:

- A formula-driven vehicle replacement program designed to replace vehicles as they reach the end of their DOT defined useful life.
- Equity in authorized program funding. The MAP-21 FY 2014 authorization for the State of the Good Repair program (\$2.166 billion) is more than five times the amount authorized for the Bus and Bus Facilities Formula (\$428 million). The ratio is not equitable and funding allocation for bus replacement does not begin to meet the amount needed to replace vehicles at the end of their useful life as defined by the Federal Transit Administration.
- A restored and adequately funded Small Starts Program

New five-year reauthorization legislation, which recognizes the needs of all transit providers and which authorizes reasonable funding levels, would provide the environment necessary for transit systems to adequately plan and deliver service in the future. MPTA believes it is important to develop a nonpartisan approach to reauthorization based on needs defined by transit providers throughout Missouri, including the critical need for bus replacement. The reauthorization legislation should provide for responsibly funded increases in support for transit and transportation infrastructure needed for American economic competitiveness.

US Department of Transportation Budget

- FY 2013 Department of Transportation (DOT) Budget: The current FY 2013 Continuing Resolution should be extended for the remainder of the Fiscal Year so the Congress can focus on passing the FY 2014 DOT Budget.
- FY 2014 DOT Budget: MPTA supports the passage of a FY 2014 Appropriation bill before the start of FY 2014.

Federal Support of Public Transit and the Nation's Transportation Infrastructure

- **Tax Support for Transit:** In recognition of the significant unmet need for reinvestment in the nation's transportation infrastructure, and the difficult fiscal issues confronting the nation and Congress, MPTA supports an increase in revenue for the Transportation Trust Fund. A revenue increase for the Transportation Trust Fund (TTF) would provide support to public transit and the maintenance and improvement of the nation's transportation infrastructure. It would also eliminate the need for future general fund bailouts of the TTF. In 2010, the bipartisan National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform proposed a gradually implemented 15 cent increase in the Federal Gas Tax as a reasonable and user-based means to provide the dollars necessary to fully fund the Transportation Trust Funds. MPTA supports such an increase in the gas tax as a sound method of addressing the revenue need.
- **E-Commerce Enabling Legislation:** MPTA supports federal legislation that would allow Missouri-based traditional brick and mortar retailers to compete more effectively against out-of-state-internet sellers. Passage of federal legislation is required to provide the State of Missouri with the option to require the collection of sales and use taxes by out-of state sellers.
- **Grant & Funding Requests:** MPTA supports the Federal FY 2013 and FY 2014 funding and grant requests of the Association's Member Transit Providers.

Other Federal Legislative and Regulatory Priorities & Issues:

- **Energy Policy:** The MPTA supports the adoption of a national energy policy that fosters domestic energy independence and freedom from our nation's historic reliance upon foreign imports and the associated vagaries and other disruptions associated with this supply chain.
Increasing the use of public transit is a key element of needed changes in national energy policy designed to decrease the use of fossil fuels and the negative impact of emissions on the environment. In view of this, MPTA supports a new national energy policy that is carefully crafted to transition to the long-term energy policy goals in a manner that does not significantly increase transit's near-term energy costs.
- **Healthcare Transportation:** Access is key element of quality healthcare. Public transit service is an important element of access. It is therefore important to address and resolve in law or regulation the ongoing issue of support for transit fares and operations for those patients who rely on public transit, including Veterans, Medicare and Medicaid recipients. The Affordable Care Act includes funding options for the promotion of livable communities, in which transit plays a vital role. It is particularly important that implementing regulations for the Affordable Care Act reaffirm NEMT as a crucial part of the expanded Medicaid program. In addition, Congress should consider proactive measures to increase support of health-centered human service transportation provided through funding by all cabinet-level departments. A positive sign in this direction is the creation by the Affordable Care Act of the National Prevention, Health Promotion, and Public Health Council composed of the heads of 17 federal agencies, including the US DOT. Legislation should also require the development of strategies to use public transit in urban and rural communities to connect veterans and their families with crucial ongoing health care and therapies. It is very important that regulations under the Affordable Care Act that impact public transit providers are crafted so as not to negatively impact revenues from medical transportation. The Affordable Care Act will increase the employment costs of many transit providers, making any revenue loss highly problematic, especially in the face of higher demand occasioned by the Affordable Care Act.
- **Ridesharing:** Support the use of ride sharing, carpooling and van pooling. Ride sharing is an especially important transportation tool for rural residents and others who are required to travel long distances to education and employment opportunities, and to access essential goods and services.
- **Rulemaking:** The U.S. Department of Transportation rulemaking process is crucial to both capital programs and day-to-day operations in the industry. Therefore, it is important to require that transit operators and stakeholders are more actively involved in all rulemaking and policy decisions emanating from Federal Transit Administration and other U.S. Department of Transportation offices, by establishing formal advisory committees and the broad application of negotiated rulemaking.

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One Passenger to the Next.