

Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments
Joint MTC ABAG Legislation Committee

May 9, 2025

Handout - Agenda Item 4a

Washington D.C. Legislative Update

Subject:

April 2025 Report from Washington, D.C. advocate.

Issues:


None identified.

Recommendations:

Information

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Summit Strategies Team Report – April 2025
- Attachment B: MTC Surface Transportation Reauthorization Submission to House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee



Andrew B. Fremier



SUMMIT
STRATEGIES

440 1st Street, NW, Suite 440
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 638-3307 main
www.summitstrategies.us

Summit Strategies Team Report – April 2025

From: Summit Strategies Team

To: Andrew B. Fremier, Executive Director

Date: May 1, 2025

Subject: April 2025 Federal Policy Monthly Report

- **Surface Transportation Reauthorization Update**
 - **House Moves on Budget Framework**
 - **U.S. Department of Transportation Nominee Update**
 - **Supporting MTC Priorities in Congress**
 - **National Transportation News Roundup**
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Below is a status update on issues of interest to MTC and the actions that we have taken to date.

Surface Transportation Reauthorization Update

This month, the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee and House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee held hearings on surface transportation reauthorization.

In the Senate EPW hearing, Chair Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) outlined her priorities for surface transportation reauthorization, which included: improving safety and reliability, reforming and modernizing federal programs, and addressing surface transportation needs across all states. The hearing was an opportunity for Senators to ask Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy about the backlog of projects that have been awarded grants but do not have signed grant agreements. Duffy defended his agency before the Senators. He noted that his agency had inherited 3,200 projects that had been selected for awards but did not have signed grant agreements. Duffy also claimed that he was honoring the will of Congress by looking at grants for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) and climate requirements, arguing such provisions were not included in the text of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

In the House T&I Committee hearing, Members of Congress asked industry stakeholders about the status of the transit system. Democratic Members emphasized that every \$1 billion dollars spent on public transportation unlocks \$5 billion in economic activity and supports 50,000 jobs. Democratic Members also emphasized that riding transit is ten times safer than driving. Republican Members talked about the importance of rural public transportation, safety, and decried the loss of ridership since the pandemic despite historic investments from the BIL.

Trade groups are also preparing for surface transportation reauthorization. The Rails to Trails Conservancy outlined four priorities for the legislation. This includes:

- Investing in dedicated active transportation programs, including the Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP).
- Strategically deploying multi-modal federal discretionary grants.
- Modernizing formula programs, with an emphasis on improving safety.
- Optimizing programs to increase impact.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials also unanimously adopted its vision statement leading into reauthorization discussions. Their three core policy principles are:

1. Prioritizing formula-based federal funding to states.
2. Improving project delivery and program administration by increasing flexibility, simplifying environmental regulations, and reducing program burdens.
3. Creating a more safe, resilient, and efficient future by supporting the ability of state departments of transportation to harness innovation and technology.

Congress plans on moving on surface transportation reauthorization quickly. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chair Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) announced that she is in the process of collecting information from her fellow Senators on their priorities for surface transportation reauthorization with the goal of marking up draft legislation in the fall of this year. House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-WA) has also announced that he thinks his committee will mark up draft legislation in the fall. The committees are currently soliciting input on legislative proposals from stakeholders and members. Your MTC team has supported the agency in meeting committee deadlines for sharing early input, including the requirement from the House T&I Committee for sending a letter in advance of May 1. That letter is included as Attachment B.

House Moves on Budget Framework

This month, House Republicans approved a Budget Resolution advancing President Trump's tax, military spending, energy policy, and border security package. The vote was 216-214 with two Republicans voting against the measure. Legislators in both the House and Senate will now move forward with drafting a budget reconciliation package to meet the tax and spending parameters contained in the resolution.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee marked up its portion of the reconciliation package on April 30th. House Republicans advanced a proposal that will cut more than \$4.5 billion in environmental and fuel programs, along with assessing a new annual fee for electric vehicle drivers—the fee would put a new \$250 annual fee on electric vehicles and \$100 on hybrid vehicles.

U.S. Department of Transportation (U.S. DOT) Nominee Update

This month, former Representative Marcus Molinaro (R-NY) was approved by the Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee to be the next Administration of the Federal Transit Administration. Molinaro was confirmed in a 20-4 vote, with all but four democrats supporting his confirmation.

Trump has nominated Sean McMaster, an executive with Boeing and former vice president with infrastructure consulting firm HNTB, to be the next administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). McMaster previously served as deputy chief of staff at U.S. DOT as well as deputy assistant secretary for Congressional affairs from 2017 to 2019. He also has experience in Congress, working as a professional staff member for the House T&I Committee from 2011 to 2017, and as deputy chief of staff for former Representative John Mica (R-FL). Other professional experiences include working for the International Trade Administration and at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. There is no date for Sean McMaster to have a confirmation hearing before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee.

Supporting MTC Priorities in Congress

Your DC Team has been hard at work and has communicated with several Congressional offices and agencies over the last month. This list includes:

The DC Team spoke with the Senate Appropriations Committee Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee (Majority and Minority staff) on the need for a healthy allocation to support transit.

The DC Team reached out to the U.S. Department of Transportation for information related to apportionment timing.

The DC Team created a fly-in schedule with meetings confirmed with the offices of Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA), Representative Sam Liccardo (D-CA), Representative Lateefah Simon (D-CA), Representative Jared Huffman (D-CA), Representative John Garamendi (D-CA), Representative Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA), and Representative Kevin Mullin (D-CA), and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Highways and Transit Subcommittee.

The DC Team attended an event to celebrate Representative Mark DeSaulnier's (D-CA). At that event, the DC Team spoke with Representative DeSaulnier about the need to preserve key

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) investments such as Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement (CMAQ) program, and the Carbon Reduction program as they are critical to the region's transportation future. The DC Team also spoke about the need to continue and grow the FTA State of Good repair program which benefits the Bay Area and would provide agencies like BART with funding to modernize and improve service which is a focal point of the Congressman's.

The DC Team briefly introduced themselves to Representative John Garamendi's (D-CA) newest transportation staffer, Sophia. She replaces Iain Hart who has left the Hill and works for a clean automobile alliance.

The DC Team submitted MTC's surface transportation reauthorization priorities and shared them with the Bay Area delegation.

National Transportation News Roundup (links to articles)

- [DOT Seeks Input on Cutting Transportation Regulations \(Transport Topics\)](https://www.ttnews.com/articles/dot-seeks-streamlining-input)
<https://www.ttnews.com/articles/dot-seeks-streamlining-input>
- [CA: Caltrain ridership gets big uptick since electric trains introduced \(Mass Transit\)](https://www.masstransitmag.com/rail/news/55281005/ca-caltrain-ridership-gets-big-uptick-since-electric-trains-introduced)
<https://www.masstransitmag.com/rail/news/55281005/ca-caltrain-ridership-gets-big-uptick-since-electric-trains-introduced>
- [NY Gov. says congestion pricing will remain despite federal deadline to end the program Sunday \(CNBC\)](https://www.cnbc.com/2025/04/20/ny-gov-hochul-says-congestion-pricing-will-remain.html)
<https://www.cnbc.com/2025/04/20/ny-gov-hochul-says-congestion-pricing-will-remain.html>
- [AASHTO's Board Adopts Core Reauthorization Principles \(AASHTO\)](https://aashtojournal.transportation.org/aashtos-board-adopts-core-reauthorization-principles/)
<https://aashtojournal.transportation.org/aashtos-board-adopts-core-reauthorization-principles/>