

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

November 3, 2023

Agenda Item 2b

Washington D.C. Legislative Update

Subject:

October 2023 Report from Washington, D.C. advocate.

Issues:

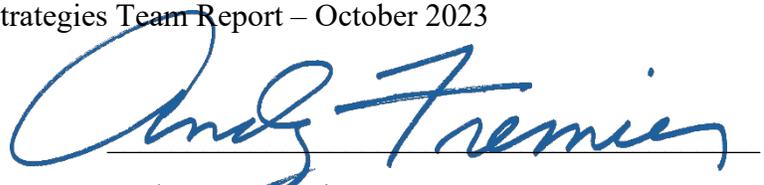
None identified.

Recommendations:

Information

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Summit Strategies Team Report – October 2023



Andrew B. Premier



SUMMIT
STRATEGIES

440 1st Street, NW, Suite 440
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 638-3307 main
(202) 595-9192 fax
www.summitstrategies.us

Summit Strategies Team Report – October 2023

From: Summit Strategies Team

To: Andrew B. Fremier, Executive Director

Date: October 31, 2023

Subject: September Federal Policy Monthly Report

- **House Selects a New Speaker**
 - **Senate Makes Progress on Minibus**
 - **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.

House Selects a New Speaker

The U.S. House of Representatives finally has a new speaker. Representative Mike Johnson (R-LA) was selected as speaker on Wednesday, October 25, 2023, after winning the votes of the entire Republican party conference. Speaker Johnson's selection marks the end of a nearly three-week-long saga that saw Representatives Steve Scalise (R-LA), Jim Jordan (R-OH), and Tom Emmer (R-MN) try and fail to win the gavel.

Speaker Johnson is one of the most inexperienced leaders in the history of the House of Representatives, having been elected in 2016. However, in his short time in the House, Johnson has earned the praise of conservative Republicans for his work challenging the 2020 presidential election and opposing abortion rights. His conservative credentials allowed him to earn the votes of the Republican members that sunk the bids of Representatives Steve Scalise and Tom Emmer. Further, Johnson does not have the same personal baggage that plagued fellow conservative candidate Representative Jim Jordan and prevented him from winning the support of moderate Republican members.

During the speaker selection process, Johnson proposed passing a stop-gap funding measure – also called a continuing resolution (CR) – that would fund the government through either January 2024 or April 2024. Passing the CR would allow the House and Senate more time to pass the annual appropriations bills. With less than a month left until the government runs out of funding and escalating crises in Ukraine and Israel, there is a pressing need to come to an agreement on government spending. The measures will pose an early test of Johnson and his narrow 221-212 majority's ability to agree amongst themselves and to work with Democrats in the Senate and the White House. However, it is unclear how an inexperienced speaker like Johnson will navigate his first challenge.

Senate Makes Progress on Minibus

In the Senate, Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) is working towards passing the annual appropriation bills, including the three-bill minibus, which includes the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration; Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies; and Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies measures. Recently, Leader Schumer reached a breakthrough with Senate Republicans on a final

list of amendments for the package. The \$280 million-dollar package will likely be voted on in the next two weeks, earning bipartisan support. The Senate plans to pass the minibuss before it turns its attention to the \$106 billion supplemental funding request from the White House. The supplemental funding bill would provide funding for Ukraine, Israel, Taiwan, and the border, and has the support of Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY). However, conservative House Republicans are likely to balk at the high price tag and have shown an unwillingness to combine funding for Israel with any other measure.

Supporting MTC Priorities in Congress

The DC Team continues to lobby the House of Representatives against including harmful amendments in the annual appropriations bills. Amendments like Perry 134 would prohibit federal funds from being used on red light cameras and speed cameras. The DC team and staff have raised the issue for Bay Area city partners and are helping to develop a strategy for how to oppose Perry 134 and other amendments, including writing a letter of opposition. The DC Team is also sharing concerns with appropriations staff on amendments that would reduce transit funding – including Capital Investment Grant funding – in the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies spending bill.

National Transportation News Roundup (links to articles)

- [Laphonza Butler Will Not Run for Feinstein's Senate Seat in 2024 \(The New York Times\)](#)
- [Albuquerque Makes Final Push for Fare-Free Transit \(Governing\)](#)
- [Senate strikes deal, puts minibuss back on track \(The Hill\)](#)
- [Legacy programs stymie Biden's efforts to boost equity in infrastructure spending \(Route Fifty\)](#)
- [JD Vance's anti-mask amendment passes the U.S. Senate \(Cleveland.com\)](#)