

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

February 9, 2024

Agenda Item 3b

Washington D.C. Legislative Update

Subject:

January 2024 Report from Washington, D.C. advocate.

Issues:

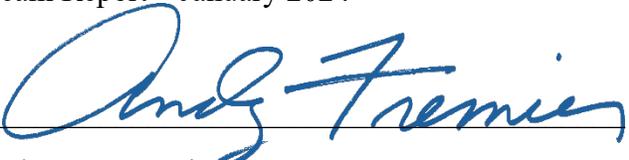
None identified.

Recommendations:

Information

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Summit Strategies Team Report – January 2024


Andrew B. Fremier



**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 – January 2024

From: Summit Strategies Team

To: Andrew B. Fremier, Executive Director

Date: February 6, 2024

Subject: January Federal Policy Monthly Report

- **Congressional Leaders Announce Topline Numbers**
 - **Supporting MTC Priorities in Congress**
 - **National Transportation News Roundup**
-

Below is a status update on issues of interest to MTC and the actions that we have taken to date.

Congressional Leaders Announce Topline Numbers

Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) have announced topline spending levels for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 appropriations. As part of the agreement, \$886 billion will be allocated to defense funding and \$773 billion for non-defense spending. The totals represent a small change from last year's spending levels, with military funding seeing an approximately three percent increase and non-defense spending seeing a less than one percent cut.

As soon as the deal was announced, several house GOP lawmakers came out against it, arguing the concessions that Speaker Johnson won did not go far enough. As part of the deal, the Speaker negotiated \$6 billion in rescissions in unspent COVID relief program funds and \$10 billion in Internal Revenue Service rescissions funding.

While Congress announced topline spending levels, appropriators did not have enough time to pass full year appropriations bills before the latest continuing resolution (CR) expired, so Congress passed another stopgap spending bill that will keep the government funded through March. The latest measure marks the third time that Congress has been forced to pass a short-term spending measure to keep the government open while members negotiate the FY 2024 spending bills. Like the short-term spending bill that preceded it, this measure will also be "laddered" with the first deadline on March 1st covering the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration; Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies; Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies; and Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies spending bills and a March 8th deadline covering the remaining eight spending bills. The stopgap funding measure also included a few additional items such as extending the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, extending the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program, and providing spending flexibility to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to hire and train air traffic controllers. The March 8th appropriations deadline coincides with when FAA authorities will expire, setting up a busy start to 2024 for lawmakers.

Supporting MTC Priorities in Congress

This month, the DC team contacted several congressional offices and committees to promote MTC's priorities, including Senator Laphonza Butler (D-CA), Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA), Senate Environment and Public Works Committee staff, House Transportation and Infrastructure Highways and Transit Subcommittee staff, Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Representative John Garamendi (D-CA), Representative Barbara Lee (D-CA), Representative Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA), and Representative Kevin Mullin (D-CA).

In meeting with these offices, the DC team supported MTC's application for a \$10 million PRO Housing grant for the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority (BAHFA) (grant awards are expected to be announced this month) and to support MTC's efforts to secure Bridge Investment Program (BIP) funding for the Bay Bridge. Specifically, the D.C. team has been working to address an eligibility challenge that surfaced with the most recent BIP notice of funding opportunity. In addition to directly engaging Senator Padilla's office on the issue, the team has secured letters of support for the Bay Bridge application from California's Senators. MTC staff also coordinated with Representative Barbara Lee who led a sign on letter with House delegation members. These letters will demonstrate to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that this project is a regional priority. Further, the team is building a coalition with other interested parties – including Senate Banking Committee chair Sherrod Brown (D-OH) whom the team has met with and whose state is facing a similar eligibility challenge and the Senate Environment and Public Works committee – to explore potential avenues for legislative fixes.

The House of Representatives recently passed H.R. 7024, Tax Relief for Working Families Act of 2024, in an overwhelming bipartisan vote. While it is unclear if the bill can pass in the Senate, the DC team and MTC staff are continuing to provide technical assistance to members of the Bay Area Congressional Delegation to support their efforts to retain MTC's top priority in the bill: Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) reforms that will boost affordable housing production.

The DC Team is also preparing for MTC's May trip to Washington.

National Transportation News Roundup (links to articles)

- [Is Combining 27 Transit Agencies into One a Good Idea? \(Governing\)](#)
- [Violent assaults on transit workers are on the rise \(Axios\)](#)
- [WMATA launches new website to give riders report on use of public transit \(Mass Transit\)](#)
- [The US Postal Service's new EV chargers are here \(The Verge\)](#)
- [Short-Term Deal Reached on Funding Bill \(Transport Topics\)](#)