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October 2015 Monthly Report for MTC

To: Steve Heminger, Executive Director
From: Tom Bulger, President, GRI
Re: Monthly Report for October 2015
Date: November 3, 2015

- **House Moves Surface Transportation Authorization Legislation**
- **Congress Approves Two-Year Budget Agreement**
- **Another Highway Trust Fund Extension**
- **United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Announces FY 2015 Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grants**
- **Coming and Going**
- **Meetings**

House Moves Surface Transportation Authorization Legislation

The entire month of October was mostly devoted to the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's efforts to secure a six-year surface Transportation authorization bill. The bill H.R. 3763, the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act is an amendment to the Senate's amendments to H.R. 22 or simply the Senate Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy (DRIVE) Act. The house bill is expected to be voted on the House floor this week.

Overall funding levels in the House Bill:

- Provides \$325 billion over six-years for Highways, Transit and Highway Safety, which is approximately equal to these programs baseline funding levels plus annual inflation increases. We had recommended increased funding levels but the House Majority would not support additional funding levels. Conversely, the Senate Drive Act increased overall funding by \$16 Billion over the current program baseline.
- Six-year Funding levels for Highways is \$262 Billion, Transit is \$55 Billion.
- Increases the percentage of Surface Transportation Program (STP) that would be suballocated to regions like MTC from 50 % to 55% over the life of the bill. MTC supported this change in current law.
- Creates a national freight program called the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects Program funded at \$725 Million in FY 2016, \$735 Million in FY 2017, and \$750 Million the last four years of the Bill.
- Funds transportation alternatives (Bicycle, Pedestrian, Trails and Safe Routes to Schools) at the current funding level of \$819 Million/ Year. Metropolitan Planning Organizations, like MTC, can use up to 50% of this funding for other Surface Transportation eligible projects.

The Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) Program was reduced from \$1 Billion /year to \$200 Million/year. The Senate Bill provides \$300 Million for the TIFIA program.

Congress Approves Two-Year Budget Agreement

Late on October 28, 2015, the House voted 266 to 167 to approve a two year budget agreement. The Senate approved the budget deal in a late night session the next day.

The Budget agreement increases the current Budget's ceilings for discretionary appropriations by \$50 Billion in FY 2016 and \$30 Billion in F Y 2017. The increases are split evenly between defense and non-defense.

Another Highway Trust Fund Extension

Congress approved another extension for the Highway Trust Fund in October. The latest extension is for three weeks to November 20, 2015. This legislation also extended the deadline for railroads and commuter railroads to install positive train control (PTC) by three years to December 31, 2018.

United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Announces FY 2015 Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Grants

On October 29, 2015, the USDOT announced the recipients of the \$485 Million FY 15 TIGER Grants. None of the Bay Area's TIGER Grant applications were selected in this round.

Coming and Going

- On October 2, 2015, the Eno Center for Transportation Board of Directors announced that Emil Frankel will serve as Interim President and CEO, as Joshua Schank, the former CEO and President, accepted a position at the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

Meetings

- Numerous meetings and conference calls with House Delegation offices as well as MTC staff.