

## May 2017 Monthly Report for MTC



**To:** Steve Heminger, Executive Director MTC

**From:** Tom Bulger, President GRI

**Date:** June 2, 2017

**RE:** Monthly Report for May 2017

- **FY 2017 Appropriations Approved**
- **Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EP&W) Hearing on Streamlining Infrastructure Projects**
- **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Coordination Regulation Overturned**
- **Secretary Chao Testifies before Senate EP&W**
- **President's FY 2018 Budget**
- **Coming and Going**

### **FY 2017 Appropriations Approved**

In early May 2017, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees approved the Omnibus Appropriations (H.R. 244) spending package. A total of \$19.5 billion is provided to the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT), an increase of \$650 million over FY 2016. For Federal Highway, the FY 2017 total is \$43.2 billion and the Federal Transit program is \$9.7 billion. The agreement includes the full obligation limitation for the Highway Trust Fund contract authority contained in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act. Congress disregarded the President's request to defund the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery program and appropriated \$500 million.

The Congress passed the FY 2017 Omnibus spending bill on May 3, 2017 two days before the funding deadline. The President signed the legislation on May 5<sup>th</sup>.

### **Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EP&W) Hearing on Streamlining Infrastructure Projects**

On May 3, 2017, I attended a Senate EP&W Committee hearing on project streamlining. The result of the hearing is to hopefully forge a bipartisan agreement on project streamlining prior to the ultimate \$1 trillion infrastructure package by the White House.

### **Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Coordination Regulation Overturned**

On May 12, 2017, the President signed S.496 by Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.) a bill to repeal the USDOT rule concerning MPO Coordination and Planning Area's. MTC supported and advocated for this legislation.

### **Secretary Chao Testifies before Senate EP&W**

On May 17, 2017, I attended the Senate EP&W Committee hearing with Secretary Chao of USDOT. The hearing did not shed much light on the President's Infrastructure proposal. However, Senator Kamal Harris (D-Calif.) pressed the Secretary to fund the Caltrain Electrification Project. On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Federal Transit Administration announced that it will sign a full funding grant agreement for the Caltrain electrification project.

### **President's FY 2018 Budget**

On May 23, 2017, the Administration submitted their FY 2018 Budget. The President's \$1 trillion in infrastructure will be funded through a combination of new federal spending, incentivized non-federal funding and newly prioritized and expedited projects. The Administration's Infrastructure principles are:

- Make targeted Federal Investments;
- Encourage Self Help;
- Align Infrastructure investment with entities best suited to provide sustained and efficient investment; and
- Leverage the private sector.

### **Coming and Going**

- Jeffrey A. Rosen has been confirmed as Deputy Secretary of USDOT.
- Alex Herrgott has left Senator Inhofe's staff to be Associate Director for Infrastructure at the White House Council for Environmental Quality.
- Adam J. Sullivan has been nominated to be Assistant Secretary of Transportation, Governmental Affairs at USDOT. He was at the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor.
- Sean McMaster, former Deputy Chief of Staff to former Rep. John Mica, will be the Deputy Assistant Secretary - Congressional at USDOT.