

March 2019 Monthly Washington, D.C. Report



To: Therese W. McMillian, Executive Director

From: Tom Bulger, President GRI

Date: March 29, 2019

RE: Monthly Report for March 2019

- **MTC Executive Director Therese W. McMillan Testifies Before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committees Subcommittee on Highways and Transit**
- **Washington, D.C. March Meetings**
- **California Transportation Congressional Reception**
- **White House 2020 Budget**
- **Coming and Going**

MTC Executive Director Therese W. McMillan Testifies Before the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committees Subcommittee on Highways and Transit

On March 13, 2019, the Highways and Transit Subcommittee held a hearing on how the federal government's role in highway and transit policies needs to change in order to meet current and future challenges.

The current authorization, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act is set to expire in September 2020.

MTC's testimony stressed increased federal investment in transportation, specifically in metropolitan areas. Therese cited the federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) and the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) programs because they provide flexible solutions. Additionally, the STP Program should be increased to its' former funding level of 62.5%, versus the current level of 55%.

Washington, D.C. March Meetings

From March 10th through March 13th the following meetings were held:

- Senator Dianne Feinstein
- Senator Kamala D. Harris policy Staff Ike Irby
- Rep. Jackie Speier
- Rep. Barbara Lee
- Rep. Jimmy Panetta
- Rep. Zoe Lofgren
- Rep. Jerry McNerney
- Rep. Mark DeSaulnier
- Rep. Nancy Pelosi, Robert Edmonson Chief of Staff
- Senate Banking Committee (Majority & Minority)
- Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (Minority)
- Federal Transit Administration
- Intelligent Transportation Society of America
- Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors
- National Association of Regional Councils
- US Conference of Mayors
- Eno Center for Transportation
- Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations
- American Public Transportation Association
- Transportation 4 America

Meetings with Rep. John Garamendi and Rep. Jared Huffman had to be cancelled due the T&I hearing which lasted four hours.

California Transportation Congressional Reception

On March 12th in the Gold Room of the Rayburn House Office Building, we hosted our annual California Transportation Congressional Reception. Our special guest, Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) and the Chairman of the House T&I Committee delivered a stimulating talk on producing a reauthorization bill this session of Congress.

Twelve Members of Congress attended as well as numerous Congressional staffs. From the feedback received, I thought it was one of our best attended receptions.

White House 2020 Budget

On March 11th the White House released the 2020 Budget, which appears to punt on a long- term plan to fix the Highway Trust Fund's financing problems. Instead the 2020 budget would rely on FAST Act funding levels, it wouldn't fix the looming \$7.6 billion highway contract authority recession as included in the FAST Act. The most disturbing feature of the 2020 budget is a request for \$494.8 million for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Capital Investment Grants program. This program received \$1,391.5 billion in the FY 2019 Appropriations bill.

Coming and Going

- Thelma Drake's nomination to be the FTA Administrator was reported out of the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee. Senate confirmation vote has not been scheduled as yet.