

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission
MTC Legislation Committee**

July 10, 2020

Agenda Item 4g

Tom Bulger's Report

Subject: June 2020 Report from Washington, D.C. advocate.

Recommendation: Information

Attachments: Attachment A: Tom Bulger's Report – June 2020


Therese W. McMillan

June 2020 Monthly Washington, D.C. Report



To: Therese W. McMillan, Executive Director

From: Tom Bulger, President GRI

Date: June 29, 2020

RE: Monthly Report for June 2020

- Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation in America Act (INVEST Act) (H.R.2) Reported out of the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I Committee)
- Trump Administration Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill
- Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW) Hearing
- Virtual Meetings

Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation in America Act (INVEST Act) (H.R.2) Reported out of the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I Committee)

On June 19, 2020, the House T & I Committee finished two days of marking up the INVEST Act (H.R. 2). Following this markup was challenging because the House wi-fi internet bandwidth was compromised by the Judiciary Committee holding a police reform bill hearing. Switching to YouTube solved the first day's markup internet problems. Over 300 amendments to H.R. 2 were filed. The most contentious was Chairman DeFazio (D-OR) 99-page managers amendment.

Included in the manager's amendment is a provision that we worked on that will benefit the Bay Area and thus MTC. For over a year, the local and regional government groups have advocated a percentage increase in the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Federal Highway program. This program funding is sub-allocated within a state by population to MTC. Last-minute advocacy led by the U.S. Conference of Mayors successfully persuaded the Committee staff to increase this program from 55% (current law) to 57% in Fiscal Year (F.Y.) 2022, 58% in F.Y. 2023, 59% in F.Y. 2024 and 60% in F.Y. 2025. The program was also renamed the Surface Transportation Program (STP).

On June 22, 2020, the House Committee on Rules released a 2,309 -page infrastructure bill, including the surface transportation reauthorization bill from the House T & I Committee and other House committees. Interestingly, no one has proposed how to pay for the surface transportation reauthorization; another bailout for the Highway Trust Fund is included. This time the bill consists of a \$106.7 billion from the General Fund to the Highway Trust Fund and \$38.6 billion from the General Fund to the Mass Transit Account. This adds to our ballooning deficit; at the same time, fuel pump prices are around \$2.00/ gallon.

A House vote on this massive Infrastructure bill is expected this week. As of this date, over 300 amendments to the infrastructure bill have been submitted.

Trump Administration Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill

There are rumors that the Trump Administration may release their 10-year, \$810 billion surface transportation reauthorization bill this week or next week. I am not holding my breath as the bill will mirror what was included in the President's Budget in February 2020.

Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EP&W) Hearing

On June 4, 2020, I watched the Senate EP&W Committee's virtual hearing on Infrastructure the Road to Recovery. Highlights from the Hearing include: Shovel ready infrastructure projects don't work to stimulate the economy, long term surface transportation projects are needed, users should pay for infrastructure, but Congress shouldn't raise user taxes in 2020.

Virtual Meetings

Numerous virtual meetings with the staff of the U.S. Conference of Mayors and MTC Congressional Transportation staff regarding increasing the sub-allocated percentage of the STBG program were attended.