

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

October 9, 2020

Agenda Item 3c

Tom Bulger's Report

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

Recommendation: Information

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



Therese W. McMillan

September 2020 Monthly Washington, D.C. Report



To: Therese McMillian, Executive Director MTC

From: Tom Bulger, President GRI

Date: September 25, 2020

RE: Monthly Report for September 2020

- Congress and the Administration at an Impasse
- Continuing Resolution and One-Year Reauthorization is Pending
- COVID-19 Relief Reboot
- United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Announces Final Rule for Major Capital Projects
- BART Receives \$1.2 Billion FTA Grant
- New Legislation

Congress and the Administration at an Impasse

Over the last two years, the House, Senate, and the Administration have confronted the most important political events in decades. For example, a Presidential impeachment, the most prolonged government shutdown, the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, economic recession, high levels of unemployment, race and policing, tensions with China, and historic fires and tornadoes. As well as an unhinged President who regularly proposes policies that undo historical norms, challenge the Constitution's system of checks and balances, and result in endless court battles on items relevant to MTC, including environmental regulations and the U.S. Census.

And now a Supreme Court fight that will surely inflame both sides of the aisle. People are exhausted.

Continuing Resolution and One-Year Reauthorization Enacted

Faced with the end of the Federal Fiscal Year on September 30, 2020, Congress passed and the President signed H.R. 8337, providing a Continuing Resolution (CR) to December 11, 2020, for federal appropriations. The bill also extends the federal surface transportation authorization (FAST Act) until October 1, 2021. Additionally, it provides \$13.6 billion for the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), including \$3.2 billion in the Mass Transit Account of the HTF to ensure FAST Act funding levels can be continued through the next fiscal year.

COVID-19 Relief Reboot

On Monday, September 28, 2020, the House produced a new \$2.2 trillion COVID-19 relief bill and have begun further negotiations with the Administration. Public Transit stimulus in this new effort is significant at \$32 billion in total, including about \$20 billion in formula funds. A summary of the package can be found [here](#). There is also \$179 billion in funding to assist local governments and \$238 billion to assist states with the fiscal impacts resulting from the pandemic. With respect to housing, \$21 billion is provided to assist homeowners struggling to afford their housing obligations and \$50 billion is provided for emergency assistance to help low-income renters avoid eviction.

United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Announces Final Rule for Major Capital Projects

On September 23, 2020, the USDOT announced a final rule amending Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulations for Project Management Oversight (PMO). The final rule streamlines the PMO regulation by reducing the number of projects subject to FTA project management oversight. The new rule redefines a major capital project as a new fixed guideway project with a total cost of \$300 million or more with a federal investment of \$100 million or more. Previously, the threshold was \$100 million or more, excluding federal support.

BART Receives \$1.2 Billion FTA Grant

On September 14, 2020, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) announced a \$1.2 billion in federal grant funding for the BART Transbay Corridor Core Capacity Program. The program includes a new train control system, 252 new rail cars, six new power substations, and a 250 - railcar storage facility. The overall program cost is \$2.7 billion.

New Legislation

Congress is nearing its conclusion. Therefore, there was no pertinent legislation to report.