

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

November 8, 2024

Agenda Item 2b

Washington D.C. Legislative Update

Subject:

October 2024 Report from Washington, DC advocate.

Issues:


None identified.

Recommendations:

Information

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Summit Strategies Team Report – October 2024



Andrew B. Fremier



**SUMMIT
STRATEGIES**

440 1st Street, N.W., Suite 440
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 638-3307 main
(202) 595-9192 fax
www.summitstrategies.us

Summit Strategies Team Report – October 2024

From: Summit Strategies Team

To: Andrew B. Fremier, Executive Director

Date: October 29, 2024

Subject: October 2024 Federal Policy Monthly Report

- **Congressional Leaders Prepare for Lame Duck Session**
 - **Supporting MTC Priorities in Congress**
 - **National Transportation News Roundup**
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Below is a status update on issues of interest to MTC and the actions that we have taken to date.

Congressional Leaders Prepare for Lame Duck Session

Congress has been out of session the last month as politicians crisscross the country campaigning before the Presidential Election on Tuesday, November 5, 2024. Regardless of who wins in November, Congressional leaders are already preparing for a busy legislative calendar before the end of the year. Speaker of the House Mike Johnson (R-LA) will likely use the lame duck session to try to pass Fiscal Year 2025 spending bills, so that Republicans can start with a clean slate going into 2025. Other legislation that will likely be debated in the coming months are the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which Senator Jack Reed (D-RI) vowed will see movement soon after election day, and the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which has been languishing since the House and Senate passed their respective versions of the 2-year authorization over the Summer.

Supporting MTC Priorities in Congress

Your DC Team has been hard at work and has communicated with several congressional offices and agencies over the last month. This list includes:

The DC Team circulated a letter from MTC Executive Director Andrew Fremier to Representatives Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA), Anna Eshoo (D-CA), and John Garamendi (D-CA) on bridge tolls and taxes in the Bay Area.

The DC Team scheduled a meeting with the Office of Representative Anna Eshoo to discuss the members' concerns about raising bridge tolls or taxes in the San Francisco Bay Area to fund transit operations.

The DC Team participated in a meeting between members of the MTC team and board with Representative Anna Eshoo (D-CA), Representative Mark DeSaulnier (D-CA), and Representative John Garamendi (D-CA). The meeting was in response to a letter the three offices sent expressing concern over certain options being explored to raise new revenue and improve transit in the region. The meeting went very well, with all parties pledging to stay involved, informed, and engaged.

The DC Team reached out to staff with Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), Representative John Garamendi (D-CA), and Representative Zoe Lofgren (D-CA) regarding a tour of the West Oakland Link of the Bay Skyway Project and a bridge tour focused on the Bay Area Toll Authority's bridge preservation efforts.

The DC Team shared MTC's Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant Program (RCP) grant application with the offices of Speaker Emerita Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) and Senator Laphonza Butler (D-CA) in an effort to seek a letter of support. The DC Team also connected with Representative Barbara Lee's district office about the RCP grant application.

The DC Team talked with senior officials at the U.S. Department of Transportation regarding the status of various federal grant applications and the eligibility of funding for transit services.

The DC Team met with the Intelligent Transportation Society of America (ITSA) and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) to discuss surface transportation reauthorization.

In early October, the DC Team organized a meeting with Representative Mark DeSaulnier's (D-CA) Legislative Director, Sarah Jackson, to discuss the upcoming Bay Area toll increases tied to bridge preservation. During the meeting, the DC Team discussed the background and history of toll increases. The DC Team also discussed in depth the need for the increase as well as how this increase is unrelated to ongoing discussions about the need for additional funding for transit operations in the Bay Area.

The DC Team met with Representative Mark DeSaulnier's (D-CA) transportation staff, Grace Chan. The DC Team spoke about the current situation regarding transit funds, the Department of Labor, and about the upcoming reauthorization and began to lay out a plan for that process.

National Transportation News Roundup (links to articles)

- [Some transit riders haven't returned due to crime fears. New fare gates aim to reassure them \(A.P.\)](https://apnews.com/article/transit-security-gates-crime-fare-evaders-metro-ab439fdcd189086164fba2f1bfb1c18d)

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- [California awards \\$1.3 billion in Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program funding \(Mass Transit\)](https://www.masstransitmag.com/management/article/55238606/california-awards-13-billion-in-transit-and-intercity-rail-capital-program-funding)
<https://www.masstransitmag.com/management/article/55238606/california-awards-13-billion-in-transit-and-intercity-rail-capital-program-funding>
- [An on-demand shuttle service is quietly reshaping Bay Area transit \(SFGate\)](https://www.sfgate.com/local/article/on-demand-shuttle-reshaping-bay-area-transit-19850327.php)
<https://www.sfgate.com/local/article/on-demand-shuttle-reshaping-bay-area-transit-19850327.php>
- [Massachusetts Extends Free Transit Through June 2025 \(Planetizen\)](https://www.planetizen.com/news/2024/10/132294-massachusetts-extends-free-transit-through-june-2025)
<https://www.planetizen.com/news/2024/10/132294-massachusetts-extends-free-transit-through-june-2025>
- [SEPTA workers unanimously authorize strike \(NBC\)](https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/septa-workers-unanimously-authorize-strike/4010709/)
<https://www.nbcphiladelphia.com/news/local/septa-workers-unanimously-authorize-strike/4010709/>