

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

June 13, 2025

Agenda Item 4a

MTC / ABAG 2025 Washington, D.C. Advocacy Trip

Subject:

Overview of meetings and key takeaways from conversations with Members of Congress, committee staff, and the Federal Transit Administration.

Background:

Last month, MTC Chair Sue Noack, ABAG President and Commissioner Belia Ramos, and Commissioner Alicia John-Baptiste traveled to Washington, D.C., for MTC's annual federal advocacy trip. They were joined by members of the MTC-ABAG executive leadership and legislative team.

Over the course of three days, the group attended nearly two dozen meetings, including with offices of 12 members of the Bay Area Congressional delegation:

1. U.S. Representatives DeSaulnier, Garamendi, Huffman, Liccardo, Lofgren, Mullin, Panetta, Pelosi, Simon and Thompson
2. U.S. Senators Padilla and Schiff

In addition to meeting with Congressional offices, the delegation met with the Federal Transit Administration and professional majority and minority staff on key congressional committees with jurisdiction over transportation policy and funding. These included House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD), the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, the Senate Banking, Housing and Urban Development Committee and the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee, including Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-WA).

Congressman Larsen also spoke at the Annual California Transportation Reception, which MTC co-hosts with the Southern California Association of Governments. Hundreds of California transportation partners, Members of Congress, and staff attended the reception.

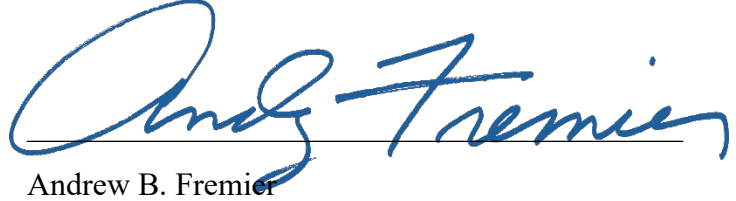
The trip occurred at a strategically important time, aligning with the early stages of congressional work on the next surface transportation reauthorization bill. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, or BIL) is set to expire on

September 30, 2026. Federal transportation bills typically take years to draft and negotiate. The House T&I Committee gave House members a May 31, 2025, deadline to submit their IIJA reauthorization priorities. Senate committees have similarly begun engaging stakeholders and seeking member priorities. The timing of this year's trip provided an opportunity for MTC to share our priorities, with the goal of shaping the next surface transportation bill from the outset. Conversations with members and staff focused on the following priorities, which are outlined in MTC's 2025 Report to Congress (https://mtc.ca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-05/2025_Report_to_Congress_05-23-2025.pdf) and MTC's submission to the House T&I committee, included as Attachment A:

3. **Preserve Core Highway and Transit Programs:** Highway and transit formula programs are the backbone of the federal program, providing certainty that allows for long-term performance-based planning and consistent project delivery. Congress should continue the IIJA formula funding levels (plus inflation), including the General Fund advance appropriations for bridges and transit state of good repair. A fully funded Capital Investment Grant program also is essential for the Bay Area's priority transportation system modernization and expansion projects.
4. **Prioritize Formula Funds to Meet the Needs of Today and Tomorrow:** States and regions need predictable, flexible and adequate resources to deliver on national priorities like safety, state of good repair and congestion relief. Formula funding rightly enables local decision-making while minimizing administrative burden. While discretionary programs remain important for testing new ideas and funding nationally significant projects that are too large for formulas, the vast majority of federal transportation money should be distributed by formula.
5. **A Strong Federal Partner to Address 2025's Biggest Challenges:** Congress should remove barriers and accelerate projects getting to construction through new initiatives like establishing a Resilient Regions Challenge to fund national demonstration projects, modernizing project delivery rules to cut red tape and updating federal tolling tools.

Attachments:

- Attachment A: MTC's Transportation Bill Priorities - Submission to House T&I



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