OBAMA-BIDEN TRANSITION PROJECT

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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS

AASHTO

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AASHTO Recommendations for the U.S. DOT Transition Team.

Economic Stimulus – When an economic stimulus bill is enacted, State DOTs and U.S.DOT will need extensive cooperation to move transportation projects quickly through federal approvals to award and construction. AASHTO would like to work with the new U.S. DOT leadership to identify ways to expedite delivery of stimulus projects.

Maintaining Highway Trust Fund Solvency – State DOTs and U.S. DOT will face three related challenges prior to the end of FY 2009: (1) the potential for a cash flow interruption similar to what happened in September, 2008, if highway trust fund revenues fall below projections; (2) the potential for a complete disruption in the federal-aid highway and transit programs if authorization legislation cannot be enacted by the 2009 expiration date; and (3) a potential $19 billion reduction in the highway program and a $5 billion cutback in the transit program in FY2011, if new funding is not forthcoming. AASHTO offers the following recommendations:
Highway Trust Fund Solvency : Develop an "early warning system" to enable State DOTs to prepare for a potential Highway Account cash flow interruption.
Interim Funding: Work with AASHTO to explore options for interim funding to assure Trust Fund solvency from July, 2009 to October 1, 2010, to avoid a cutoff of highway program reimbursements to states, and to cover the contingency that enactment of a surface transportation authorization bill is not completed by October 1, 2009.

Key AASHTO Surface Transportation Authorization Principles:
Restructure current programs to directly address six national objectives: preservation, freight, safety, system improvement/congestion reduction, operations and environment.
Apportion 90% of highway funds to states to fund the core programs.
Reform the planning and project selection process to deliver performance, outcomes and accountability.
Fund highways, transit, freight and intercity passenger rail at $545 billion over six years to restore the program's purchasing power and to take the multimodal approach needed.

Intercity Passenger Rail Plans – Work with state DOTs to develop plans for improving intercity passenger rail service and plans to improve the freight rail system.

Collaborate with State DOTs and AASHTO to Develop Positive Strategies to Address Climate Change and Energy Security. Reach out to the transportation community to develop greenhouse gas reduction strategies including CAFÉ standards, decarbonizing transportation fuels, improving system operations, reducing growth in vehicle miles traveled, and funding necessary adaptation.

Partner with Transportation and Environmental Communities to Identify Strategies to Accelerate Project Delivery. Communities, safety and the economy all lose when projects get hung up in a process that takes too long. Work to find "win-win" solutions to speed up project delivery and improve protection of the environment.

Make Freight a Priority – Sustaining economic competitiveness will require U.S. DOT to increase its staff capability to join state DOTs and industry to define a broad national freight policy and develop a multi-modal freight system investment plan.