

The Honorable Steny Hoyer, United States House of Representatives, 5th District, Maryland.

The Honorable Christopher Van Hollen, United States House of Representatives, 8th District, Maryland.

The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton, United States House of Representatives, District of Columbia.

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION,
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD,
Washington, DC, April 15, 2015.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE POLICY PRINCIPLES FOR THE 2015 REAUTHORIZATION OF FEDERAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS

Whereas, the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board (TPB), which is the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Washington Region, has the responsibility under provisions of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) for developing and carrying out a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process for the Metropolitan Area; and

Whereas, since 2000 the TPB has been calling attention to the region's long-term transportation funding shortfall, and has documented its unmet preservation, rehabilitation and capacity expansion needs for the region's highway and transit systems; and

Whereas, federal funding for transportation infrastructure plays a significant role in the National Capital Region; projects such as the interstate system and the Metro system could never have been built without the leadership, long-standing commitment, and financial support of the federal government; and

Whereas, the Washington region continues to face the challenges of accommodating growth in people and employment, more pervasive congestion on highways and transit systems, and delays in completing critical rehabilitation needs and key expansion projects; and

Whereas, MAP-21 was enacted on July 6, 2012 as a two-year bill, and was extended on August 8, 2014 through May 31, 2015, which was the ninth time in the last decade that Congress has enacted a short-term extension of the federal highway and transit programs.

Whereas, it is anticipated that Congress will likely again enact a short-term extension prior to the May 31st expiration of MAP-21, but the need for sustained and long-term federal funding could remain unaddressed; and

Whereas, the lack of predictability in federal funding programs has undermined the ability of state and local implementing agencies to effectively plan and build transportation facilities that are vital to meet the challenges of the future; and

Whereas, the lack of sustained and adequate federal funding for transportation undermines economic growth in our region and across the nation and hinders our global competitiveness; and

Whereas, both Maryland and Virginia took historic steps in 2013 to address their transportation funding shortfalls by raising new revenues, and the District of Columbia took similar steps five years ago, but nonetheless, the inadequacy of sustainable federal funding remains a critical concern; and

Whereas, the TPB has regularly communicated its positions regarding federal transportation legislation to Congress, including policy principles in 2002 and 2008, and a letter on May 21, 2014 calling upon Congress to protect the Highway Trust Fund from insolvency; and

Whereas, at the November 19, 2014 meeting, the TPB directed staff to develop a set of policy principles for the reauthorization of

the federal surface transportation program that the Board might communicate to the U.S. Congress; and

Whereas, on April 3, 2015, the TPB Technical Committee received a briefing and commented on draft proposed policy principles; Now, therefore, be it

Resolved that the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board approves the attached 2015 Policy Principles for the Reauthorization of Federal Surface Transportation Programs" and further, be it

Resolved that the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board calls on the United States Congress to reauthorize an enhanced federal surface transportation program for a full six-year period, consistent with the attached Policy Principles.

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION
TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD,
April 15, 2015.

2015 POLICY PRINCIPLES FOR THE REAUTHORIZATION OF FEDERAL SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS

The federal government has an historic interest in transportation. The benefits of federal investment in a balanced, multimodal transportation system have long been recognized as critical to our national interest, promoting economic growth and providing access to opportunities for all individuals. In addition, the federal government has a unique obligation to support interstate commerce and to meet critical emergency and security requirements, and thus should provide an equitable contribution towards the cost of maintaining, operating and building our transportation infrastructure.

The National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board supports the following policy principles as a common-sense approach for reauthorization of the federal surface transportation programs.

1. Increase Federal Transportation Funding

A substantial increase in federal surface transportation funding levels is needed to address the current under-investment in the maintenance, operations and expansion of the nation's transportation system.

All reasonable and predictable strategies for sustained long-term funding should be pursued, including:

Increases in federal fuel taxes or other user-based taxes and fees;

Indexing fuel taxes and user fees to inflation so as to maintain the buying power of transportation funds;

Implementing pricing strategies enabled by emerging technology for all modes of travel, including rates that vary by time of day, type of vehicle, level of emissions, and specific infrastructure segments used;

Incentivizing federal support and coordination of innovative financing techniques, including public/private partnerships;

Utilizing savings from tax reform legislation; and

Creation of national infrastructure banks or bonding programs.

2. Fund Priority Needs

An explicit program focus, with enhanced funding, is needed to put and keep the nation's transportation infrastructure in a state of good repair.

Federal transportation policy should provide for increased federal funding focused on metropolitan congestion and other metropolitan transportation challenges, with stronger partnerships between federal, state, regional and local transportation officials.

The federal commitment to balanced multi-modal transportation systems must be reaffirmed including by restoring parity between the transit commuter benefit and the parking commuter benefit. As communities

seek to reduce dependency on driving and serve non-drivers, alternatives must be developed and supported. In particular, federal funding for public transit and safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure should be enhanced.

3. Promote Effective Planning and Project Development

More timely, detailed, and flexible requirements to comply with MAP-21's mandate for performance based planning and programming should be promulgated. Adequate and timely federal support, including funding, should be provided to the states and metropolitan areas to adopt and implement the program requirements.

The current set of performance measures outlined in MAP-21 should be allowed time to take effect and be evaluated before enhancements are considered.

Streamlining federal planning and environmental review processes, outlined in MAP-21, that are aimed at ensuring timely delivery of transportation projects, should be supported.

Given the critical role of goods movement in our economy and the demands of freight on our infrastructure, a national freight program should be a key component of a long-term reauthorization act.

Ms. NORTON. I want to emphasize, as we approach the end, how little of a partisan problem we are talking about this evening. Republican Governors have signed the laws that I have referred to.

The committee—Mr. GARAMENDI will remember this—had Republican Governors, State department of transportation executives, cities, counties, regional councils, and the rest before us, and the notion of devolution came up.

This hearing was interesting because when devolution has come up, and devolution simply means that if States are raising their gas tax. Well, let's stop doing a Federal highway or surface transportation bill.

These States are raising their gas tax, and they are waiting for us to raise ours so that the partnership that is represented by State gas taxes and Federal gas taxes will remain whole until we find some other way to do this.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

PASS A SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for the remainder of the hour as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, may I ask how much time is remaining in the hour?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from the District of Columbia has 16 minutes remaining.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. GARAMENDI spoke about the Eisenhower years, which gave us the present highway trust fund. Its lasting effects make it a monumental contribution to American law. Our generation has the obligation to move on, now that we have become so efficient that the highway trust fund, as set up 50 years ago, is obsolete.

I remind the House that, during the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln built the railroad system. How could you do that during a time when the country is split apart, and in this House, we can't figure out a way to get a highway surface transportation bill passed?

I looked up the latest figures—actually, 2015—on how our country ranks today. We ought to compare that to what Lincoln did, now going on 150 years ago, and what Eisenhower did 50 years ago.

We now rank 25th in the world for infrastructure quality. We are behind every last one of our allies, and now, we see some developing countries creeping forward. We better watch out for China. They are not in the top 30 now, but they are going to get there soon.

I remind this House that the way in which this country became the heavyweight that it is in the world was through the development of its infrastructure. We had to somehow create a seamless infrastructure that would go from across the continental United States, from east to west and from north to south.

With that, everything else became possible. Without that, we are simply going to be overtaken by nations that are far behind us now but, as I indicated are getting caught up.

I wanted to say a word about at least one other section of the GROW AMERICA Act because it relates to transit systems which are under special strain and which, interestingly enough, are embraced by people, from big cities to the smallest towns.

When I say “transit systems,” I am talking about everything from light rail and street cars that we have here in a big city like the Nation’s Capital to rapid transit and buses that rural America depends upon and that are simply breaking down and unable to handle the traffic.

There is a very special provision of \$115 billion to invest in these transit systems. The reason that this investment would be so acceptable is that there is no part of America that it does not touch.

I am not talking about, for example, subway systems of the kind we have in the District of Columbia and New York. I am talking about light rail and street cars and buses and rapid transit buses that small-town America uses and depends upon, and that is in the GROW AMERICA Act.

Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, the Democrats on the Transportation and Infrastructure committee are having a roundtable where each member is going to discuss a project that is stuck because we have not passed a surface transportation bill. What we are trying to do at 2:30 p.m. tomorrow is put a face on what infrastructure means.

What infrastructure means, for example, in the District of Columbia, is the H Street or Hopscotch Bridge. I didn’t take on one of the bridges that is simply falling down. There are alto-

gether 31 projects in the District of Columbia that are awaiting funding. I have asked that the projects be put into the RECORD. Some of you would be interested if you were from the District, but it doesn’t matter. You all have projects like this in your districts.

Unless we raise the ante, unless we make this an offer that this House cannot refuse, we are going to keep patching this bill until there is nothing left to patch.

This is a House that does not move, even in a crisis. We saw that with the Department of Homeland Security appropriation, that they simply would not give up. Finally, when the administration wouldn’t change its immigration executive order, they simply had to let it pass. That is how we figured that one out.

Surely, there is a more rational way to figure out a surface transportation bill. I am working—at least on my side of the aisle—with 1-minutes this week, with the Special Order hour Mr. GARAMENDI has taken out, with social media, and with our work with the many organizations who have come here because this is National Highway and Transportation Week, as they have so declared. We are trying our best.

In this case, we are not trying to reach a compromise. We are simply trying to get to a bill so that we can simply sit down and talk about it. If you don’t want to talk about the GROW AMERICA bill, put your own version of a bill, but don’t insult the American people by giving us nothing except another patch.

I appreciate that, at least on my own committee, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, there is an earnest effort to find a solution to this crisis. I commend Chairman SHUSTER and Ranking Member DEFAZIO for working together in search of a solution. I call upon the Ways and Means Committee, through whom the funds must come, to do their job.

Together, we can do this. We are not going to let this House rest; we are not going to drop this issue, even on May 31, when the funds are set to run out and we have to find a patch. We are going to keep coming to this floor so that the American people know that there are at least some Members of this House who are struggling to get a surface transportation bill, are earnest about it, and won’t give up.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 2100

CONSTRUCTION OF THE KEYSTONE XL PIPELINE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity

to talk for a little while tonight about some challenges that we are facing as a nation.

Mr. Speaker, I have never run for office before, and I will tell you I never had intentions of running for office. After sitting home watching from my home State of Louisiana, watching what is happening in Washington, and watching the dysfunction in this Nation, I think that the major motivation for running for office was more out of frustration than anything else—the disparity, the inconsistency in policies, decisions being made that lack, I think, the public interest and are being made more so as a result of political decisions.

Unfortunately, what I am going to talk about tonight I don’t think will be the only subject that I end up coming back and talking about over the next several months.

It seems that, oftentimes, the Federal Government’s decisions, their policies, their regulations seem to lack any type of connectivity to what is actually happening on the ground—decisions being made in a vacuum, decisions lacking, I think, the true expertise. What I am going to talk about tonight is an example of that.

This picture right here is a picture or the result of bad Federal policy. Now, the administration would lead you to believe that this picture is what is going to happen by building the Keystone pipeline.

This is oil, Mr. Speaker. This is oil in all of these bags that was recently picked up, but the administration would make you think that this is what is going to result from constructing, from building the Keystone pipeline.

The irony is that these bags don’t have anything to do with the Keystone pipeline. This was actually oil that was picked up just in the last few months from an oil spill that happened in the Gulf of Mexico, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill 5 years ago—5 years ago, Mr. Speaker.

This administration has been asked over and over and over again by the State of Louisiana and by the coastal parishes in our State to force the responsible parties to go clean up the oil, and it is not happening. It hasn’t happened. They haven’t been held accountable.

It is unbelievable to me that we have an administration out there talking about their opposition to the Keystone pipeline because they are concerned about the environmental consequences at the exact same time—and over the last 5 years—allowing this to continue. It is hypocrisy. It is absurd, and it is obviously not in the public interest, Mr. Speaker.

The only reason that the White House, the only reason that the State Department is involved in any decisionmaking whatsoever in the Keystone pipeline is a result of the fact that the pipeline actually crosses the border between Canada and the United