



# The National Beat

May 7, 2026

## In This Issue

Feature Focus.....	2
Reauthorization Update. What Do We Know and Where are We Now? .....	2
USDOT Monthly Intergovernmental Affairs Stakeholder Call .....	4
National Beat Feedback .....	5
Infrastructure Week Media Template .....	5
BASICS Act.....	5
BASICS Act Resources.....	7
Federal Roundup.....	8
Congress .....	8
Congressional “Vibe” Check.....	8
National News.....	10
Recent Editions .....	12

## Feature Focus

Reauthorization Update, USDOT Monthly Intergov Meeting, National Beat Feedback, Infrastructure Week Media Template, and the BASICS Act

---

### Reauthorization Update. What Do We Know and Where are We Now?

The transportation community has been preparing for the next surface transportation reauthorization for over a year. Stakeholders have submitted priorities, marker bills have been introduced, Congress and USDOT have signaled what the next bill might look like broadly, and we are currently awaiting the official release of legislative text for the next bill. It is helpful to understand what has happened over the last year, what we currently know, and what we can expect in the coming months.

***TL;DR:** Congress and USDOT are signaling a shift toward a “back to basics” surface transportation bill that prioritizes traditional highway and roadway infrastructure over the broader, multimodal investments seen in transportation bills since ISTEA in 1991. A markup for the next surface bill is expected to be held during the week of May 18. Even if the House moves on reauthorization, the Senate is still significantly behind, making a CR likely.*

#### What we know

In June 2025, House T&I Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO) indicated that the next surface transportation reauthorization would return “**back to basics**,” with a focus on core infrastructure such as roads and bridges. This marked an early signal that the next surface bill would be less expansive than the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which significantly expanded federal transportation funding through competitive, multimodal grant programs supported by multi-year advance appropriations.

A “back to basics” approach suggests a pullback from many of the discretionary and multimodal programs created under IIJA, and a potential shift toward formula-based funding and traditional highway priorities.

This direction has been reinforced through [FY2026 THUD appropriations](#) proposals, the [President’s FY2027 budget](#), and broader USDOT actions, all of which point toward prioritizing traditional surface transportation modes.

---

<b>President’s FY2027 Budget</b>	<b>THUD FY2026 Appropriations Package</b>
<b>Themes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advance-appropriations-funded programs (Division J) are not extended</li><li>• CIG, NEVI, RAISE/BUILD programs see significant funding cuts</li><li>• Focus on freight, highway, bridge, port, and trucking programs</li><li>• Transit and rail programs see significant reductions in funding</li></ul>	<b>Themes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rescinded unobligated balances across USDOT grant programs (RAISE/BUILD, INFRA, PROTECT, BIP)</li><li>• Redirected funding from non-core federal highway infrastructure programs (SMART and NEVI)</li></ul>

---

- Greater investment in earmarks, truck parking, and generally highway infrastructure programs
  - Transit and rail see funding growth only through redirected funding, and programs are given narrower scopes
- 

Beyond budget and appropriations actions, USDOT has also signaled a stronger emphasis on traditional surface transportation priorities. This includes reduced emphasis on pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure relative to [roadway capacity](#). These priorities have been reflected in recent grant program shifts, including adjustments to [SS4A guidance](#) that disincentivize roadway capacity reduction projects. Similar themes have appeared in USDOT actions, including decisions to remove [DC bike lines](#) over concerns that they were creating congestion.

## Where we are now

Over the past few years, one theme has remained consistent: the next surface transportation reauthorization will not be another IIJA.

Current baseline expectations from Chairman Graves suggest a total authorization level in the range of approximately [\\$500–\\$550 billion](#), with a potential ceiling near \$600 billion. This would represent a flat to modest increase relative to current baseline levels ([IIJA had baseline of \\$539 billion](#)), but the more important question is not topline funding, it is how funds are allocated and which programs are retained.

A key uncertainty is the structure of the bill itself. Historically, rail has not always been included in surface transportation reauthorization, but both the FAST Act and IIJA included rail titles. Under current signals, FRA programs could see reduced funding relative to IIJA levels, though programs such as CRISI and RCE may remain due to their popularity but still at potentially lower funding levels.

## Timing and Outlook

At the start of the year, both House T&I Chairman Graves and Senate EPW Chair Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) expressed interest in moving a surface bill early, with a target of passage by the Sept. 30 expiration of IIJA funding. Since then, Sen. Capito has indicated that meeting that timeline will be difficult, reflecting limited progress in the Senate to date.

In the House, activity has accelerated in recent weeks, particularly following Chairman Graves' [announcement that he will retire](#) at the end of his current term. In that announcement, he reaffirmed his commitment to completing the surface bill. The committee initially targeted an [April 27 markup](#), but is now [targeting a markup during the week of May 18](#).

Despite this movement, the broader legislative calendar remains crowded with FY2027 appropriations processes beginning, limiting available political bandwidth for such a major piece of legislation to move. Historically, surface bills are not completed on time and are preceded by a CR. Given the lack of progress in the Senate, a CR is likely as Congress looks to miss the Sept. 30 deadline.



For MPOs and MPO Policy Boards, continued engagement will be important. This includes educating Members of Congress, submitting letters of support for MPO and AMPO priorities, and maintaining regular communication with congressional delegations. These efforts will be critical to ensuring MPO priorities are reflected in either an early House markup or in post-CR negotiations shaping the final surface bill.

### Read AMPO's Analysis of Key Authorization Updates Below:

- [The President's FY2027 Budget Proposal](#)
- [FY2026 THUD Appropriations Bill](#)
- [House T&I Member Day](#)
- [LOT Coalition Letter to Senate and House Transportation Leadership](#)

---

## USDOT Monthly Intergovernmental Affairs Stakeholder Call

On May 5, USDOT's Intergovernmental Affairs Team held their monthly stakeholder call to provide updates on general USDOT activities as well as to provide updates from across modal agencies.

Leadership highlighted recent safety-focused actions, including expanded trucking enforcement as well as coordinated federal responses to disruptions in the aviation sector. Across agencies, officials shared key NOFOs and deadlines, including BUILD, Safe Streets for All, ferry programs, port infrastructure grants (PIDP), and major safety initiatives. The overarching theme emphasized improving safety, modernizing infrastructure, and accelerating project delivery through streamlined application processes and clearer federal guidance.

### FRA Update on RCE and CRISI

A major portion of the session focused on FRA rail grant programs, particularly the CRISI (Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements) and RCE (Railroad Crossing Elimination) programs.

- The CRISI program, with over \$2 billion available, supports a range of eligible projects, from track and bridge upgrades to safety technology and workforce development.
- The RCE program, with approximately \$1.1 billion in its final authorized funding cycle, is specifically targeted at eliminating or improving highway-rail grade crossings, prioritizing projects that remove crossings entirely or enhance corridor-wide safety.

Both programs emphasize project readiness, detailed cost estimates, and strong local match commitments, with **deadlines of June 22 for CRISI and June 8 for RCE**. USDOT highlighted the new selection preferences for the programs such as those that align with current USDOT initiatives on safety, economic competitiveness, innovation, and supporting American families. You can review all application selection preferences in full using AMPO's NOFO Tracker:

→ [AMPO's NOFO Tracker](#)

### Flagged RCE or CRISI Resources

#### RCE:

- [FRA Office Hours, May 11, 2026 at 2:00 pm ET](#)



- [FY2025-2026 RCE Program NOFO Webinar Recording](#)
  - [Webinar Presentation File](#)

#### CRISI:

- [FRA Office Hours, May 13, 2026 at 2:00 pm ET](#)
- [FY2025-2026 CRISI Program NOFO Webinar Presentation File](#) (Webinar Recording to be uploaded to the FRA website soon)

---

## [National Beat Feedback](#)

We are always looking for ways to improve the National Beat to best provide you with useful updates from DC and across the transportation industry. If you have the time, it would be very appreciated to hear any suggestions or comments about the National Beat, whether it is how to improve it, additional content you would like to see, or just to leave a note. Thank you to all of those who have already submitted feedback.

[→ AMPO National Beat Feedback Survey](#)

---

## [Infrastructure Week Media Template](#)

Every year, [United for Infrastructure](#) hosts [Infrastructure Week](#) to bring together government, private sector, and community stakeholders in the transportation industry. From May 18 – 22, United for Infrastructure will be hosting events to highlight infrastructure projects that improve safety, economic development, and quality of life across all communities.

With surface transportation reauthorization on the horizon, Infrastructure Week is a great opportunity for MPOs to highlight some of the work that they are currently working on or to showcase projects completed within your communities. Use the following link to access AMPO's Infrastructure Week Media Template and Toolkit for a range of media resources and social media graphic templates to highlight your MPOs important work.

---

## [BASICS Act](#)

On Feb. 9, [Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet \(D-MI\)](#) and [Rep. Rob Bresnahan \(R-PA\)](#) introduced [HR 7437](#), the bipartisan [Bridges and Safety Infrastructure for Community Success \(BASICS\) Act](#). **The legislation would invest in bridges, deliver regional priority projects, improve road safety, enhance transparency and collaboration, and build stronger rural and urban regions.** Cumulatively, this would improve local and regional access to funding to plan, deliver, and maintain the systems that communities rely on every day.

[→ Access AMPO's Analysis of the BASICS Act here](#)

### [BASICS Act Update](#)



On April 9, **Rep. Jay Obernolte (R-CA), Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-NM), Rep. James Baird (R-IN), and Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-IN)** [signed on as cosponsors](#) for the **BASICS Act, representing bipartisan support from four states across the country.** Interest among congressional offices and Members of Congress has elevated in recent weeks, with additional cosponsors pending. This is likely a result of increased support from locals and MPOs, as MPO Policy Boards and MPO Statewide Associations from across the country have either submitted or are in the process of submitting letters of support for the BASICS Act. As reauthorization discussions move forward, building visible support now increases the likelihood that key provisions are reflected in the next surface transportation reauthorization bill. If your MPO Board is interested in signing a letter of support, please contact AMPO's Legislative Director [Katie Economou](#).

## BASICS Act Resources

### ➔ **BASICS Act Toolkit**

For all things BASICS Act, refer to the LOT Coalition's BASICS Act Toolkit, which includes bill text, summaries, one pagers, action items, and supporting materials.

### ➔ **LOT Coalition Letter to AASHTO**

On Feb. 25, the LOT Coalition, including AMPO, sent a formal letter to AASHTO leadership in response to recent public comments regarding the BASICS Act. The response includes a Q&A section directly addressing AASHTO's comments and further explaining the bill's structure and funding assumptions.

We believe it is important to clarify the intent and structure of the legislation. As drafted the BASICS Act is built on growth in the overall federal program and is intended to increase funding for both State DOTs and local and regional partners. The LOT Coalition does not seek to reduce state funding.

## Spring Fly-In

**On March 17 and 18, AMPO hosted its Spring Fly-In** with MPO participation from both our Policy and ART Committees, representing MPOs from across the country.

- Members met with federal partners, congressional offices, and industry leaders, helping inform federal research and policy and amplify the impact of MPOs nationwide.
- Policy Committee members were able to meet with congressional offices to educate and inform staffers on the BASICS Act and how planning funds directly translate into project delivery.

## Webinars

**On Feb. 19, the LOT Coalition hosted a webinar** to share more about the BASICS Act. Please refer to the BASICS Act Toolkit to review the slides and content.

On March 4, AMPO **hosted a webinar on: "Inside the BASICS Act: What it Means for MPOs and the Road to Reauthorization."** To revisit the discussion, please refer to the following resources:

- **BASICS Act [Webinar Slides](#)**
- **BASICS Act [Webinar Recording](#)**

## Resources

Brief your MPO Policy Board on how these priorities affect transportation outcomes in your region:

- [MPO Policy Board Member Letter of Support Template](#)
- [Board Resolution Template](#)
- [Updated BASICS Act PowerPoint](#)

Educate your Congressional Delegation and speak to how the provision would benefit your region:

- [MPO Education Outreach Template](#) to connect with your delegation. Using data-backed, local examples make a difference.

Work through your MPO Statewide Association:

Coordinate with MPOs statewide to share a letter in support of the BASICS Act:

- [Statewide MPO Association Letter of Support](#)

## One/Two Pagers

- [BASICS Act One-Pager](#)
- [BASICS Act Rural Benefits One-Pager](#)
- [Fair Share for Local Roads One-Pager](#)
- [AMPO Legislative Priorities One-Pager](#)
- [AMPO Planning Funds One-Pager](#)
- [AMPO Tailorable PL Two-Pager](#)
- [Tailorable Project Delivery & MPOs Two-Pager](#)

**Visiting DC? Questions about the BASICS Act? Want to meet with your Delegation?**

Please contact AMPO's Legislative Director [Katie Economou](#)



### Congress

#### Congressional “Vibe” Check

**Reauthorization.** Reauthorization activity continues to accelerate as committees refine draft language and begin shaping the next surface transportation bill.


##### Where things stand:

- **House T&I.** Majority and minority staff are finalizing draft sections. All titles **have circulated internally**. Staff-to-staff negotiations on base text are now underway, and other House committees and off-committee members are beginning to surface their own reauthorization priorities.
  - **Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO) said that the committee is targeting to markup the next surface transportation bill during the week of May 18.** The previous date of April 29 did not come to fruition as topline numbers have yet to be decided. **Rep. Graves has indicated that topline numbers will be between \$500 and \$550 billion, with the potential to reach \$600 billion.**
  - With the IIJA set to expire on Sept. 30, 2026, and with Chairman Graves in his final term amid an approaching midterm election cycle, House leadership has strong incentives to complete work this Congress.
- **Senate.** Among Senate committees, EPW is furthest along. Chair Capito (R-WV) has indicated that major action on **the bill may not happen until the summer, and that passing legislation prior to IIJA’s expiration will be a “challenge.”**
- **Administration.** On the Administration side, FHWA, FTA, and other USDOT operating administrations are transmitting their reauthorization proposals to the Office of Management and Budget, the final step before formal submission to Congress.

**A general note on timing:** Given the remaining FY 2026 work, midterm elections on the horizon, and the long history of surface transportation bills missing deadlines, **a continuing resolution/extension appears to be likely.** Even so, MPOs should operate under the assumption that reauthorization could move on time. This engagement window will not open twice, and once base text is released, shaping the bill is significantly harder via amendment.

---

#### The Buzz on Reauthorization

-  **Reauthorization and The Questions Remaining on Rail Funding:** Surface transportation reauthorization has historically treated rail inconsistently, alternating between standalone laws and partial inclusion within broader surface transportation bills,

with major funding and policy shifts occurring through TEA-LU, SAFETEA-LU, PRIIA, FAST Act, and the IIJA. As Congress approaches the next reauthorization, key questions remain on whether to maintain recent levels of rail investment and policy attention, particularly funding certainty from IIJA-era advance appropriations, and how to address competing priorities in safety, freight regulation, financing tools, and passenger rail development.

- [🔗 The President's FY2027 Budget and the Future of Rail Funding](#): The FY 2027 budget request effectively allows the IIJA-era FRA advance appropriations, which had quadrupled rail funding from about \$4 billion to roughly \$16 billion annually, to expire, resulting in an 82% (\$13 billion) reduction in total FRA funding driven by the end of large Amtrak, Federal-State Partnership, and CRISI grant programs. Notably, Amtrak is no longer issuing its customary funding request and is instead deferring to Congress amid shifting board dynamics and anticipated losses, even as the system faces rising costs, uneven post-pandemic recovery, and a large backlog of unspent IIJA capital funds.

---

## Introduced Legislation Related to Reauthorization

Whether you want to see what marker bills could be included in the next surface transportation reauthorization or are curious about what Congress is working on, AMPO is tracking all relevant legislation that has been introduced since December 2025. Please refer to our legislation tracker to see what bills have been introduced, who introduced them, and what they would do.

[➔ 119<sup>th</sup> Weekly Congress Legislation Tracker](#)

### Notable Legislation:

#### [H.R. 8315 – Modal Parity in Permitting Act](#):

- [Introduced by Rep. Dina Titus \(D-NV\)](#) and cosponsored by Rep. Rob Bresnahan (R-PA) and Rep. Laura Friedman (D-CA). The bill would allow sponsors of transit or passenger rail projects to acquire real property interests necessary for a project before completing the NEPA permitting process. This would also transit or passenger rail projects to have parity with highway construction projects during the NEPA process.

---

**What's Making Headlines?** A number of issues on the Hill are drawing attention this week outside of reauthorization.

- [🔗 DHS Appropriations Package Signed into Law Includes Transit Security Appropriations](#): The recent **DHS appropriations package includes \$99.75 million for transit, rail, and bus security programs authorized under the 9/11 Commission Act**, supporting efforts to strengthen system safety and resilience. Of this total, \$9.5 million is designated for Amtrak security and \$1.9 million for over-the-road bus security, with transit security funding directed straight to public transportation agencies. (See Title III, FEMA, Federal Assistance (4))
- [🔗 The House Appropriations Committee to Begin Markup on Transportation-HUD FY2027 Appropriation Packages](#): On **May 21, the House Appropriations Committee will be holding a Subcommittee markup for FY 2027 funding for the Department of the**



Interior, Environment, and Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (THUD) appropriation packages. **On June 4, the Full Committee will then proceed with a full FY2027 markup of the THUD funding package.** The Senate has yet to move forward with a THUD funding package of their own, and legislative text for the House has yet to be released as well.

- [🔗 White House Raises Concerns About Senate-Passed Housing Package:](#) The White House privately informed Congress about concerns regarding the Senate-passed housing package, despite prior White House support, over a provision requiring large investors to sell certain single-family rental homes after seven years. White House hesitations threaten to complicate already-stalled House negotiations on the bipartisan [21st Century ROAD to Housing Act](#), potentially opening the door to amendments and delaying passage.



## Administration & Agencies

### USDOT

- [🔗 USDOT Releases Monthly Motor Fuel Prices Revealing Price Increase Across Fuel Types:](#) The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) released their April update for 2026 motor fuel prices. **The April average price for regulator motor gasoline was \$4.10 per gallon, an increase of 12.8% from March 2026,** and an increase of 29.4% from April 2025. Along the West Coast, this was an increase of 26.5% (\$5.38 per gallon).
- [🔗 USDOT Announces 37 Port Infrastructure Development Program \(PIDP\) Awards:](#) USDOT announced awards for the 2025 PIDP grant cycle, with 37 projects awarded across the country, investing \$774 million into port projects. The awarded projects will look to improve port safety, efficiency, and the reliability as they move goods in and out of their regions.
- [🔗 USDOT's Build America Bureau Announces Awards for the Regional Infrastructure Accelerators \(RIA\) program:](#) On April 28, 2026, the Regional Infrastructure Accelerators (RIA) program awarded \$20 million to 20 recipients across 17 states to advance regional infrastructure through innovative planning, financing, and partnerships. Established under the FAST Act, the program supports entities in developing investment-ready projects by providing technical assistance, promoting innovative financing strategies, and helping bundle and structure projects to attract public and private investment.



## National News

- [🔗 Transportation Research Board \(TRB\) Study on the Health Benefits of Transit:](#) A new report from the Transportation Research Board finds transit agencies underutilize public health messaging, despite strong evidence linking transit to benefits like increased physical activity, cleaner air, and lower health care costs. Experts say clearer, more accessible communication



of these impacts could strengthen funding support and broaden understanding of transit's value beyond riders.

- [!\[\]\(f9c8920940b4337cbbeec527f8ac9321\_img.jpg\) \*\*Study of Public Comments Shows Local Resistance to Livable Street Infrastructure Projects:\*\*](#) A new study introduces “NOMS” (“Not On My Street”) to describe residents who oppose livable streets projects, arguing their car-centric beliefs, like focusing on congestion impacts and dismissing non-drivers, distort public discourse and limit safer infrastructure. The researcher argues that these deeply rooted car-centric attitudes, reinforced at local community meetings, must be challenged or they will continue to undermine meaningful transportation reform.
- [!\[\]\(845e9749bae62df6369d34b1189931bf\_img.jpg\) \*\*Changes Coming for the Opportunity Zone Program: Changes to the Opportunity Zones program make the incentive permanent, tighten eligibility to focus on lower-income areas, and introduce stronger rural incentives and new transparency requirements,\*\*](#) allowing for a new opportunity to better align investment with community needs. The update emphasizes early local engagement, project readiness, and cross-sector collaboration to ensure communities can shape designations and attract more equitable, impactful investment in the next decade.
- [!\[\]\(938d0015fba187a43362a21bd1933ad2\_img.jpg\) \*\*How Urban Design and Planning Impact Cost of Living:\*\*](#) A new study argues that high housing and transportation costs, driven by car-dependencies and urban sprawl, force Americans to work longer hours, reducing time for family and lower quality of life despite high household incomes. **The study found that more affordable, compact, multimodal communities can cut living costs, improve health and economic resilience, and give families greater freedom to prioritize well-being over excessive work.**
- [!\[\]\(05617ec18e9328b0f1a36e60ffcf2bcf\_img.jpg\) \*\*Call for Better Street Design and Not More Enforcement in Improving Roadway Safety:\*\*](#) A new report argues that America’s high traffic death toll is driven by unsafe road design, car-focused policies, and misplaced enforcement priorities, not inevitable “accidents,” and that relying heavily on police stops has done little to improve safety. Instead, the study calls for a shift toward preventative solutions like lower speed limits, safer street design, and targeted enforcement, which have been shown to reduce crashes and make better use of public safety resources.

---

## Notice of Funding Opportunities

- [!\[\]\(73937a8f461f9a87bc32687d38d0d956\_img.jpg\) \*\*Passenger Ferry Program, Electric or Low-Emitting Ferry Pilot Program, and Ferry Service for Rural Communities Program:\*\*](#) The ferry grant programs help modernize terminal infrastructure, launch new ferry routes, and fund new ferries to connect American families to their jobs and communities more efficiently.
  - **Deadline:** May 11, 2026
- [!\[\]\(da858e3d6103141af517539e8660fcef\_img.jpg\) \*\*Safe Streets and Roads for All \(SS4A\):\*\*](#) Supports local initiatives to prevent death and serious injury on roads and streets, commonly referred to as "Vision Zero" or "Toward Zero Deaths" initiatives. The SS4A program supports the US Department of Transportation's (DOT) [\*\*National Roadway Safety Strategy\*\*](#) and a goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on our nation's roadways.



- **Deadline:** May 26, 2026
- [🔗 Port Infrastructure Development Program \(PIDP\):](#) The Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) is a discretionary grant program administered by the Maritime Administration. Funds for the PIDP are awarded on a competitive basis to projects that improve the safety, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of goods into, out of, around, or within a port.
  - **Deadline:** June 1, 2026
- [🔗 Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant Program \(RCE\):](#) The purpose of the Crossing Safety Program is to fund highway-rail or pathway-rail grade crossing improvement projects, including but not limited to grade crossing elimination projects, that focus on improving the safety and mobility of people and goods.
  - **Deadline:** June 8, 2026
- [🔗 Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements Program \(CRISI\):](#) This program provides funding for projects that improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of intercity passenger and freight rail.
  - **Deadline:** June 22, 2026
- [🔗 Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\):](#) Provides federal funds to states, US territories, federally recognized tribal governments, and local governments for hazard mitigation activities by supporting the modernization of infrastructure and promoting community resilience against natural hazards.
  - **Deadline:** July 23, 2026

[➔ Access AMPO's NOFO Tracker here.](#)

---

## Recent Editions

- [April 17 \(2026\)](#)
- [April 9 \(2026\)](#)
- [April 3 \(2026\)](#)
- [March 27 \(2026\)](#)
- [March 16 \(2026\)](#)
- [March 6th \(2026\)](#)
- [February 27th \(2026\)](#)

[➔ View all past editions of the National Beat Policy Newsletter here](#)