



The National Beat

February 13, 2026

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BASICS Act

HR 7437, the **Bridges and Safety Infrastructure for Community Success (BASICS) Act**, was introduced on Feb. 9 by **Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet** (D-MI) and Rep. Rob Bresnahan (R-PA). The **legislation reflects the shared priorities of the Local Officials in Transportation (LOT) Coalition, including AMPO**. The legislation would strengthen core federal transportation programs and improve local and regional access to funding to plan, deliver, and maintain the systems communities rely on every day.

Note: This legislation can often be called a “marker bill.” It signals to congressional staff and Members of Congress what policies should be included in the next surface transportation reauthorization. Once legislation is officially introduced, either parts or the entirety of the BASICS ACT could be incorporated into the final reauthorization text.

***TL;DR:** The BASICS Act focuses federal transportation investment on core infrastructure needs by ensuring federal funding reaches communities efficiently and is used where it delivers the greatest public benefit. It is not a dramatic shift in federal transportation policy, but a targeted course correction that improves predictability, accountability, and alignment between planning and project delivery while preserving the expanded local access to federal funds established under IIJA.*

Context

Transportation serves a critical role in our society. It is how families get to work, how children get to school, how people support the economy, and how individuals access critical services such as health care. These are nationally significant issues, but the **transportation is experienced locally and regionally**. These same regional transportation networks also support freight corridors and the supply chains that drive communities, states, and the overall economy.

Those at the local level who play a role in transportation understand this well and how best to plan for and deliver safe and economically beneficial transportation systems. Yet federal transportation policy does not always reflect this reality.

Ownership

75% of the nation’s roads are owned by local governments

43% of the Federal-Aid Highway System is owned locally

16% of federal transportation funding goes to local governments

Problem

50% of locally owned principal roads are in poor condition

2X more likely that locally owned roads and bridges are in poor condition

85% of roadway fatalities occur off the Interstate System



Regions and local governments plan for, own, and operate over **75 percent of our nation's roads but only receive about 16 percent of federal transportation funding**. These same roads and bridges are nearly **twice as likely to be in poor condition** as state-owned roads and account for roughly **85 percent of roadway fatalities**. Even when projects are identified locally, funding can be delayed or deprioritized through administrative processes.

The most significant shift towards expanding local access to federal transportation already occurred under IIJA. The BASICS Act would build on that foundation by strengthening formula funding, improving coordination, and aligning funding with how the transportation system functions in practice, **without reducing state funding**. The BASICS Act explicitly recognizes that **states, regions, and local governments are partners in transportation delivery**.

What the Bill Does

At a high level, the bill would complete the following:

- **Invests in repairing bridges** by building on the bridge formula program to continue fixing bridges most in need of repair, with a focus on both state and locally owned infrastructure. The bill would ensure funding for locally owned bridges is proportional to the number of locally owned bridges in each state, directing resources to the worst-conditioned bridges regardless of ownership, improving safety and reliability across the entire system.
- **Deliver regional priority projects faster** by accelerating delivery of regionally supported projects (including those identified in TIPs) through increased STBG funding. Formula funding would help provide certainty and predictability, allowing projects to move forward efficiently through established planning processes without the delays and uncertainty associated commonly with discretionary programs.
- **Focus on road safety** by strengthening HSIP through revised apportionments and preventing transfers away from safety priorities. The bill ensures that 25 percent of HSIP funding is delivered regionally in both urban and rural areas, giving local governments direct access to capital for proven safety projects while preserving the state's overall safety role and funding.
- **Ensure transparency and collaboration** by improving visibility into how funding flows, what resources are available to regions, and how projects advance from planning to delivery, helping projects move efficiently and deliver results on the ground.
- **Build strong plans for rural and urban regions** by investing in planning capacity for RTPOs and MPOs, specifically through increased PL funding. This would support better project selection, faster delivery, and smarter investments aligned with local priorities and long-term needs.

Legislative Deep Dive

Funding Changes



The BASICS Act would make multiple changes to existing transportation statutes. Some revisions adjust how funding is apportioned and distributed, but the legislation does **not** create major new programs. It just changes how existing funds are allocated.

- **Flexibility:** States historically transfer funding between core formula programs, most **commonly from NHPP to STBG**. To reflect this practice and allow greater spending flexibility, which STBG allows for, **the BASICS Act would adjust funding from the more rigid NHPP into STBG and HSIP**, benefiting both states and local governments by enabling more flexible investment and greater spending on safety initiatives.

What this does: Increases flexibility and allows states and regions to focus investment on repairing roads and bridges and improving roadway safety.
What this does not do: Reduce funding for states.

- **Planning:** This section of the bill also increases PL funding. Historically, PL funding was a fixed amount for each fiscal year (currently sits around 0.8% of total federal-aid highway funds), not adjusting to inflation. **The BASICS Act would set PL funding at 2.5% of federal-aid highway programs for each fiscal year**, allowing funding amounts to adjust with inflation, and substantially increasing total planning funds available for MPOs.
- **Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPOs):** The BASICS Act also would establish a new funding stream for federally recognized RTPOs to ensure that rural regions, regardless of population, have access to federal funding. Specifically, **the legislation would allocate \$150 million for all States**, available for each fiscal year between 2027 and 2031. For states without federally recognized RTPOs, the BASICS Act includes a State-based pilot program to provide funding to regional entities responsible for transportation planning or economic development in nonmetropolitan areas of a state.

Funding Source	IIJA Levels (Current)		BASICS Act
National Highway Performance Program	59.10%	➡	53.7%
Surface Transportation Block Grant Program	28.70%	➡	31.10%
Highway Safety Improvement Program	6.70%	➡	7.60%
Carbon Reduction Program	2.60%	➡	2.40%
PROTECT	2.90%	➡	2.70%
Metropolitan Planning	Set Amount (\$470,000,000 in 2026)	➡	2.5% (1,392,431,372 in 2025)

Changes to STBG Consultation

State DOTs are required by statute to coordinate with MPOs on project selection, but this process does not always ensure transparency or effective communication across all levels of government. **The BASICS Act would strengthen consultation requirements**, particularly for STBG funding.

- States would be required, before obligating STBG funds in areas **with populations under 50,000 and not represented by an RTPO**, to consult with local governments, organizations



representing local governments, or elected officials. This helps ensure funding reflects the priorities of small and rural communities.

Strengthening Bridges Formula Program

The BASICS Act would continue the popular Bridge Formula Program from IIJA but rename it as the “Strengthening Bridges Formula Program,” and add it to the core formula programs. In total, **\$5.5 billion would be set aside for each fiscal year between 2027 and 2031**, while also **maintaining the \$45 million minimum apportionment** that existed under IIJA, as well as the **100% federal cost share for off-system bridges** owned by local governments. Additional changes to the program include:

- **Requiring states to suballocate 25 percent of funding by population**, ensuring local governments have access to resources to repair and replace bridges.
- **Requiring suballocated funds to support projects selected in MPO TIPs**, identified by RTPOs, or chosen in consultation with local governments where no RTPO exists.

Suballocation by Population	
(i)	In urbanized areas with an urbanized area population over 200,000
(ii)	In urbanized areas with an urbanized area population not less than 50,000 and not more than 200,000
(iii)	In urban areas where population is not less than 5,000 and not more than 49,999
(iv)	In other areas where the population is less than 5,000

HSIP Changes

A core goal of the BASICS Act is ensuring safety funding is used for safety. **The bill would require states to suballocate 25 percent of HSIP funds using the same population-based structure as STBG and the bridge program**, with consistent project selection requirements involving MPOs, RTPOs, and local governments.

Apportionment changes in the bill increase HSIP funding overall while ensuring the **new suballocation requirements do not reduce the state’s ability to support safety initiatives**.

Transferability Protections

Current law allows states to transfer funding between formula programs (HSIP into STBG). This can divert funding originally intended on improving roadway safety conditions to other programs. As nearly 100 people lose their lives on America’s roads every day, the BASICS Act would ensure that safety funds are going towards the safety needs of critical local roads.

The BASICS Act would expand transfer protections beyond STBG and PL to include all suballocated funds under existing and new programs, including HSIP, the Carbon Reduction Program, and the Strengthening Bridges Formula Program. States could transfer HSIP funds only after first making them available competitively to local governments.



Reinforcing Project Selection Requirements

The BASICS Act **reaffirms Congress's long-standing intent** that suballocated funding under STBG, HSIP, the Carbon Reduction Program, and the bridge program be obligated to projects selected through local and regional decision-making structures, consistent with existing consultation and coordination requirements.

Metropolitan Planning

For MPOs, the legislation would strengthen metropolitan planning by:

- **Increasing PL funding to 2.5%** of federal-aid highway programs for each fiscal year.
- **Providing a 100 percent federal cost share for PL funding**, ensuring MPOs meet statutory planning responsibilities and minimize administrative delays.
- **Expanding the eligibility** for planning fund use to:
 - Fiscal administration of local projects
 - Preliminary design
 - Administrative and overhead costs, general operating expenses, facilities and infrastructure costs
 - Local technical assistance
 - Housing studies directly linked to transportation.
 - Economic development studies directly linked to transportation.
 - Critical data procurement
- **Establishing a voluntary capacity-based pathway for MPOs to become direct recipients of PL funding (opt-in)**, ensuring administrative efficiency, reducing pass-through delays, and supporting streamlined project delivery.
- **Requiring USDOT to provide MPOs with access to federal financial management systems (FMIS)** in order to track federal transportation funding and to improve transparency and accountability.

Rural Transportation Planning Program Creation

Because few federally designated RTPOs exist, many rural regions rely on informal planning structures. The BASICS Act would establish a dedicated rural and non-metropolitan planning program to support RTPOs and similar entities by:

- **Creating a formula program** for federally designated RTPOs.
- **Creating a competitive grant program** for non-designated regional planning entities.
- **Guaranteeing a minimum allocation of \$300,000** annually per RTPO.
- **Providing a 100 percent federal cost share** for eligible activities.

Why is this Important and What can You Do?

The BASICS Act better aligns federal transportation policy with how the system functions in practice. Increased planning funding, greater flexibility, stronger accountability, and improved



access to safety funding would help MPOs and local governments deliver safer, more effective transportation systems for their communities.

As reauthorization discussions continue, the bill provides a framework for engaging congressional offices on the importance of regional planning, predictable funding, and locally driven project delivery. There are several ways MPOs and their board members can support the bill.

- **Review the [BASICS Act Toolkit](#)**, including bill text, summaries, one pagers, and action items
- **Tune into upcoming AMPO and LOT Coalition briefings**
 - **LOT Coalition BASICS Act Webinar: Join us on Thursday, Feb. 19, at 12:00 PM (ET) on Zoom**, as we share more about the BASICS Act and how the transportation process is progressing in Congress this spring! [Register here](#).
- **Brief your MPO Policy Board** on how these priorities affect transportation outcomes in your region.
- **Share the [MPO Policy Board Member Letter of Support Template](#)** with your board members.
- **Educate your Congressional Delegation** and speak to how the provisions would benefit your region.
- Use the [MPO Educational Outreach Template](#) to connect with your delegation.
- **Read AMPO's National Beat** weekly policy newsletter reauthorization updates.
- **Visiting Washington, DC?** Reach out to [Katie Economou](#) for materials and meeting preparation support.
- **Questions?** Reach out to [Katie Economou](#) for support.

Resources

- [LOT Coalition, BASICS Act Landing Page](#)
- [BASICS Act One-Pager](#)
- [BASICS Act Section-by-Section Summary](#)
- [BASICS Act Bill Text](#)
- [BASICS Two-Page Summary](#)
- [AMPO BASICS Act Press Release](#)
- [Local Officials for Transportation \(LOT\) Coalition BASICS Act Press Release](#)
- [BASICS Act Redline](#)



Federal Roundup

Congress: Reauthorization and Legislative Activity
Administration & Agencies: USDOT Updates



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 actively exchanging draft sections. Titles covering **NHTSA, FMCSA, FTA, and FHWA have already 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.
 - House timing remains aggressive. Bill text is *expected* to be released in early 2026, with markups anticipated in Q1 and potential floor consideration in early spring. Chairman Graves has stated his **goal of passing a bill out of the House this spring.** 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, Environment and Public Works (EPW) is furthest along. Chair Capito (R-WV) has indicated plans to release draft text and hold a markup in early March 2026, but she recently indicated that an **introduction of the bill may not happen until April or May.** Text exchanges and early negotiations between majority and minority EPW committee staff are beginning to take shape, suggesting the committee is further along in developing base reauthorization language. By comparison, the Commerce and Banking Committees are continuing early-stage drafting, and their timelines remain less defined.
- **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 appropriations work, expected policy debates, and the long history of surface transportation bills missing deadlines, a CR remains possible. 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 major provisions becomes significantly harder via amendment.

Congressional Buzz on Reauthorization

-  **The SELF DRIVE Act Drives On:** A House E&C advanced a package of auto-related bills, most notably [H.R. 7390](#), the SELF DRIVE Act (See AMPO’s analysis of the bill [here](#)), which passed narrowly on a **12–11** party-line vote and would create a national framework for deploying autonomous vehicles. The bill is controversial among safety groups who are concerned over provisions that **would allow AV manufacturers to self-certify their safety claims, without independent verification.** The legislation also lost its bipartisan support

earlier this week when the original Democratic co-sponsor, Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI), split from lead sponsor Rep. Bob Latta over safety and policy differences. Despite the divide, lawmakers say negotiations are continuing, with supporters framing the measure as key to US leadership in autonomous vehicle technology.

- [🔗 House Science, Space, and Technology Committee Hearing on Surface Transportation Research](#): The House Science, Space, and Technology Committee's Research and Technology Subcommittee held a hearing on surface transportation research to inform priorities for the next surface reauthorization, with testimony from USDOT, academics, and research leaders. Lawmakers emphasized that **transportation R&D underpins economic growth, safety, and innovation, highlighting areas such as automated vehicles, AI-enabled infrastructure, crash-avoidance technologies, and workforce development**. Both Chairmen Brian Babin (R-TX) and Rep. Jay Obernolte (R-CA) also stressed the need to protect transportation systems and research from foreign interference, particularly from China, while ensuring the US remains globally competitive in emerging transportation technologies.

Introduced Legislation Related to Reauthorization: [119th Weekly Congress Legislation Tracker](#)

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

- [🔗 The House Approves the Housing for the 21st Century Act](#): The House overwhelmingly passed the bipartisan Housing for the 21st Century Act (**390-9**) to address the national housing shortage by boosting supply and affordability. The **bill promotes zoning and land-use reforms, streamlines regulations (including some NEPA reviews), raises multifamily loan limits, supports community bank lending, and directs HUD to develop best practices to increase housing production**. Lawmakers must now reconcile the House bill with the Senate's [ROAD to Housing Act](#), but differences, especially over federal spending and bank deregulation, could complicate final passage.
- [🔗 Where did FY2026 NEVI Funding End Up?](#): The USDOT originally proposed eliminating the NEVI EV charging program, but the final FY2026 appropriations law kept the program but **cut \$879 million** and redirected it to congressionally earmarked highway projects. Of that, **\$503.8 million came from states' unobligated NEVI formula funds**, meaning only states that had not fully committed their FY2022 allocations saw reductions (26 states), while 22 states that had fully obligated funds were protected. The largest losses came from Texas, Florida, Virginia, and Missouri.
- [🔗 House Bill Looks to Fund Transit Ambassador Programs](#): Rep. Lateefah Simon (D-CA) introduced a House bill to create federal grants for transit ambassador programs, based on San Francisco BART's approach, which uses trained, unarmed staff to deter minor incidents, de-escalate conflicts, and improve rider safety. Supporters say that the ambassador program is an effective way to establish a safety presence for riders, while allowing official law enforcement personnel to focus on more serious issues. Currently, the bill has support from transit labor groups, and the legislation comes as transit agencies nationwide seek ways to sustain recent declines in crime while also supporting workforce development and rider confidence.

- [🔗 **Sen. Cruz Publishes Report Critical of High-Speed Rail Projects:**](#) Senate Commerce Chair Ted Cruz released a report that is critical of California’s high-speed rail project, blaming delays, rising costs, and lack of operational service on the leadership of Gov. Gavin Newsom. It echoes Cruz’s earlier [report on Amtrak’s Acela program](#) by arguing Democratic administrations backed ambitious rail projects without realistic timelines, financing, or infrastructure readiness. The report is also timely following recent funding disputes between California and the FRA over \$4 billion in high-speed rail funding. California initially challenged the USDOT funding freeze, but in late December 2025, the state decided to [end their lawsuit](#) and pursue alternatives to federal rail funding. These events further reinforced Cruz’s broader argument that federal support for the project should be curtailed due to mismanagement and uncertain viability.
- [🔗 **Truck Parking Club Expansion:**](#) The Truck Parking Club, an online marketplace that connects truck drivers with private property owners for parking, has expanded to **4,000 locations across 49 states**, adding 1,000 sites in just three months as it works toward 10,000 locations by the end of 2026. The platform now totals at more than **66,000 nationwide** by partnering with small businesses, warehouses, and property owners to monetize unused space. Major carriers are increasingly adopting the platform, which includes digital tools for reservations, payments, and safety, as it seeks to ease the nation’s persistent truck parking shortage and improve driver reliability and productivity.
- [🔗 **Over 1,000 Organizations Come Together With a Clear Message for Congress: Walking and Biking Infrastructure Is Essential:**](#) Earlier this month, the nation’s leading advocacy organizations for trails, walking and bicycling – the American Hiking Society, American Trails, the League of American Bicyclists, PeopleForBikes, Rails to Trails Conservancy and the Safe Routes Partnership – sent a letter to leaders of the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee with a clear message on behalf of over 1,100 organizations and millions of Americans: Walking and biking infrastructure is essential to the vitality, safety and economic resilience of communities small and large nationwide. Of the 1,000+ signers, there were signers from all 50 states plus DC, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands, as well as several MPOs.



Administration & Agencies

USDOT

- [🔗 **Transportation Secretary Duffy Speaks at Internal Town Hall Event:**](#) Secretary Duffy told USDOT staff that the agency will not formally restart the Trump administration’s Deferred Resignation Program (DRP), though employees may still participate on a case-by-case basis. Duffy also signaled that a reorganization, similar that being done at the FAA, could happen across USDOT. He also confirmed that the previous hiring freeze has ended and emphasized that most employees are expected back in the office, warning of potential consequences for those who do not comply. The FAA’s move to DOT’s Navy Yard headquarters is underway, with 300 employees relocated so far, and Duffy expects the transition to be completed within a year.
- [🔗 **USDOT Proposes Changes to EV Charger Product Materials:**](#) FHWA is proposing to increase the percentage of domestic material used to make and operate EV chargers that are

purchased or installed with federal funds, potentially raising the current 55% threshold to up to 100% US-made components. USDOT says that this change would encourage domestic manufacturing, address national security concerns, and support domestic manufacturers. Stakeholders can submit comments within 30 days via the eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov/>, Docket: FHWA-2025-0070.

- [!\[\]\(f9c8920940b4337cbbeec527f8ac9321_img.jpg\) **Future of Gateway Project Funding on Hold:**](#) New Jersey and New York, with the Gateway Development Commission, are suing USDOT over **\$15 billion in federal funding for the \$16 billion Gateway Tunnel under the Hudson River, warning the freeze threatens thousands of jobs and ongoing construction.** Last Friday, US District Judge Jeannette Vargas ordered the USDOT to release the funds as delays impact public interest. The ruling came as construction paused, putting nearly 1,000 jobs at risk, and directed both sides to submit a joint letter on key legal issues by Feb. 11. The dispute follows USDOT’s October decision to pause Gateway funding as well as congressional pushback regarding the decision. Similar actions are now starting to take place with the [Gordie Howe International Bridge](#) opening between the US and Canada. USDOT has now stated that they may not open the bridge for use until negotiations take place between the US and Canada.
- [!\[\]\(845e9749bae62df6369d34b1189931bf_img.jpg\) **US Chamber of Commerce Highlights Utah Transit Ahead of Surface Transportation Reauthorization:**](#) The US Chamber of Commerce convened FTA Administrator Marcus Molinaro, Rep. Burgess Owens, state transportation officials, and local business leaders near the FrontRunner commuter rail to **emphasize the economic importance of a strong transportation network and the need for predictable, long-term federal surface transportation funding, set to expire this year.** The event highlighted how projects like FrontRunner, which served over 4.1 million riders in 2025, supports workforce mobility, regional growth, tourism, and eventually the 2034 Winter Olympics, and local economic development. Molinaro noted that “public transit is not just about moving people. It’s about moving the economy,” while Owens and US Chamber officials stressed that reauthorization should prioritize smart investments, streamlined permitting, and projects that stay on time and budget.
- [!\[\]\(938d0015fba187a43362a21bd1933ad2_img.jpg\) **Office of Personnel Management \(OPM\) Finalizes Rule to Recategorize Civil Servant Positions:**](#) OPM on Thursday finalized a controversial rule aimed at making it easier to fire career federal employees deemed uncooperative with administrative priorities. The OPM’s new **“Schedule Policy/Career” category exempts certain positions from standard civil service protections, allowing agencies to remove employees accused of misconduct, poor performance, or intentionally obstructing administrative directives.** OPM says thousands of positions could be affected once the president designates them, though the rule would not take effect until 30 days after publication. Critics, including federal unions and watchdog groups, warn the move could politicize the civil service and chill government speech, and several have pledged legal challenges.
- [!\[\]\(05617ec18e9328b0f1a36e60ffcf2bcf_img.jpg\) **Secretary Duffy Commends State Governors for their SAFE ROADS Initiative:**](#) Secretary Duffy followed up with governors on their support for the [SAFE ROADS initiative](#), recognizing participation from all 50 states, D.C., and Puerto Rico and their continued commitment to safer, more efficient arterial streets. States identified nearly 4,300 corridors and intersections for improvements focused on reducing fatalities and serious injuries, improving operations, and minimizing right-of-way distractions. USDOT will share additional findings and next steps with state DOTs, highlighting best practices and progress under the initiative.

USDOT Enforcement Actions on CDL Compliance

USDOT is significantly escalating enforcement of federal commercial driver's license (CDL) requirements, signaling that states that fail to correct identified violations risk losing substantial federal transportation funding. These actions continue to raise legal, operational, and workforce concerns across several states. Read the [Jan. 9, 2026 National Beat](#) for additional context.

- [🔗 USDOT Moves to Extend Information Collection Rule for CDLs:](#) FMCSA is moving to extend a controversial information collection requirement for three years, even as its September interim final rule to crack down on non-domiciled CDLs and learner's permits remains paused by a federal court. The agency defended the mandate against challenges from 19 states, which argued it duplicates Homeland Security responsibilities and lacks a safety justification, while citing support from small trucking groups. FMCSA said the data is essential to verify compliance and maintain the integrity of the CDL issuance process, and is seeking **public comment by March 2** before enforcement begins once the court stay is lifted.
- [🔗 USDOT has Removed an Estimated 2,000 Commercial Drivers:](#) In January, FMCSA, together with state law enforcement, conducted the first phase of Operation SafeDRIVE, a multi-state enforcement and education effort aimed at reducing dangerous driving, ensuring driver qualifications, and removing unsafe vehicles from US roads. From Jan. 13 to Jan. 15, inspectors and law enforcement in 26 states and DC carried out 8,215 inspections, placing 704 drivers, including nearly 500 for English proficiency violations, and 1,231 vehicles out of service, and making 56 arrests, including for DUI and being illegally in the US. Secretary Duffy said the campaign shows the importance of a whole-of-government approach to safety, while FMCSA Administrator Derek D. Barrs emphasized that targeted enforcement and partnerships are critical to protecting lives.
- [🔗 FMCSA Issues Final Rule to Stop Non-Domiciled Drivers From Obtaining CDLs:](#) FMCSA finalized a rule to make more stringent requirements when issuing CDLs and commercial learner's permits to non-domiciled individuals with some exceptions for those with specific visa types. The rule eliminates the use of Employment Authorization Documents and requires passport and I-94 documentation plus mandatory SAVE system verification. The rule would be effective 30 days after publication to give states time to adjust. FMCSA says the change will strengthen CDL integrity and safety, with about 40,000 affected drivers expected to exit gradually each year over five years as credentials expire.



National News

- [🔗 USDOT Issues Guidance to Remove Political Crosswalks:](#) USDOT is offering federal guidance to states to remove colorful or "political" crosswalks, including rainbow and artistic designs, with Florida and Texas taking early action. Some cities, including Atlanta and Chicago, are resisting, arguing that they promote inclusivity and provide safety benefits. Research from Bloomberg Philanthropies' Asphalt Art Initiative shows that artistic crosswalks can reduce crashes by up to 50%, decrease dangerous pedestrian-driver conflicts, and slow traffic. Safety advocates warn that removing these crosswalks endangers lives, raising questions about the balance between federal mandates and evidence-based traffic safety measures.

- [🔗 Case Study on Affordable Housing and Transit Oriented Development \(TOD\) in Austin, Texas:](#) Austin and CapMetro are using TOD to tackle severe housing affordability and growth pressures by aligning transit expansion with housing, land use, and anti-displacement strategies. Through Project Connect and a 2023 Equity-Focused TOD Policy Plan, they created tools and policies to promote mixed-income housing, reduce parking requirements, expand zoning capacity, and guide development around transit stations, backed by federal TOD grants and \$300 million in anti-displacement funding. Some of the main challenges to the initiative include local development favoring market-rate housing, public misconceptions about affordable housing, and Texas limits on mandatory inclusionary zoning, but Austin's integrated transit-and-land-use planning offers a model for boosting affordability and ridership together.
- [🔗 Georgia DOT to Lead National Connected Vehicle Research Initiative:](#) The Georgia Department of Transportation will lead the Vehicle to Everything Pooled Fund Study, a multi-state initiative advancing connected vehicle technology. Launched in January 2026 with 20 US states and Transport Canada, the \$3.1 million study aims to improve safety, traffic flow, and automated driving through real-world vehicle to everything research. Georgia DOT and Georgia Southern University will oversee the program, with monthly virtual meetings and semiannual in-person gatherings, starting in May in Salt Lake City, Utah.
- [🔗 Bureau of Labor Statistics \(BLS\) Shows Decline in Trucking Jobs:](#) The BLS February employment report incorporated its annual revision, revealing that truck transportation jobs in 2025 were overestimated in previous reports. After adjustments, December 2025 had 1,466,900 truck jobs, 46,400 fewer than previously reported and 125,200 less from January 2023 which had a peak of 1,587,800. While overall job growth in 2025 was 130,000, it was only concentrated in health care and construction. Sectors with employees in warehouses and transportation collectively lost around 104,000 jobs between December 2024 and 2025.

\$ Notice of Funding Opportunities

- [🔗 Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development \(BUILD\) Grant Program:](#) The goal of the program is to fund projects that will have a significant local or regional impact and improve transportation infrastructure.
 - **Deadline:** Feb. 24, 2026
- [🔗 Port Infrastructure Development Program \(PIDP\):](#) Supports port and industry stakeholders to improve port and freight related infrastructure. PDIP funding specifically supports projects that improve the safety, efficiency, or reliability of the movement of goods into, out of, around, or within a port.
 - **Deadline:** Feb. 28, 2026

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

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