



# The National Beat

June 26, 2026

## In This Issue

Feature Focus.....	2
🔗 Department of Commerce Administrative Order: Disclosure Avoidance for Statistical Products Overview .....	2
🔗 OMB Proposed Uniform Grant Regulation.....	4
Federal Roundup.....	5
Congress .....	5
Congressional “Vibe” Check.....	5
National News.....	9
Recent Editions .....	10

## Feature Focus

Department of Commerce Administrative Order Analysis and the OMB Proposed Rule Analysis

---

### [Department of Commerce Administrative Order: Disclosure Avoidance for Statistical Products Overview](#)

On June 4, the Department of Commerce issued [Administrative Order 216-26](#), “Disclosure Avoidance for Statistical Products.” The order would apply to statistical products produced by the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, prohibiting the use of noise infusion data techniques and prioritizing aggregation or rounding data methods. For MPOs and other organizations that rely on Census data products for modeling and planning work, the order could significantly impact the **quality of specific geographic or demographic data needed for transportation studies**. The Department of Commerce has not issued specific guidance on which statistical products will be impacted or how affected products will be altered, but based on the existing order, there could be uncertainty surrounding the quality of data available for MPOs.

***TL;DR:** The Department of Commerce Administrative Order ([DAO 216-26](#)) would prohibit noise infusion and would shift Census Bureau and BEA toward aggregation and suppression, reducing the small-area geographic detail that MPOs depend on for travel demand modeling, long-range planning, and federal compliance. Without detailed implementation guidance, MPOs face uncertainty about which data products will change, when they will be available, and whether current planning timelines and federal requirements can still be met.*

#### DOC Order 216-26

Order 216-26 **prohibits the use of noise infusion as a disclosure avoidance method, makes coarsening (i.e., rounding, aggregating, grouping, or use of ranges) the preferred approach, and limits suppression to a last resort**. It also requires a full, individualized legal evaluation of the laws applicable to each statistical product before dissemination.

*Disclosure avoidance refers to the methods statistical agencies use to protect respondent confidentiality while still publishing useful data. In practice, statistical agencies must balance two important objectives: protecting individual privacy and producing data that remains detailed, accurate, timely, and useful for public decision-making. The new order changes that balance by prohibiting one category of disclosure avoidance methods and directing agencies toward less granular publication methods.*

For MPOs, this may raise several concerns. MPOs rely on Census and American Community Survey (ACS) data to understand regional travel patterns, demographic changes, transportation needs, and the potential impacts of federal investments. Much of this work depends on small-area data at the census tract, block group, neighborhood, corridor, or transportation analysis zone (TAZ) level. If data is rounded, aggregated, grouped into broader ranges, suppressed, or delayed, it could



become harder for MPOs to identify localized needs, compare project impacts, support grant applications, explain investment decisions, etc. Additionally, this may raise concerns regarding MPO performance metrics limiting an MPO's ability to accurately plan and to ensure that federal transportation funding is being used and delivered efficiently.

There may also be timing implications. The order **requires a full, individualized legal review of each statistical product before dissemination**. While legal review is important, this requirement could create new uncertainty around when Census products are released, whether certain products are changed before release, or whether some products are released at all. Even modest delays can matter for MPOs because planning cycles, model updates, MTP/TIP development, performance reporting, and grant applications often depend on the availability of current data. There may also be concerns about the potential effect on transportation planning resources and data products used by MPOs, state DOTs, local governments, researchers, and industry partners to analyze transportation needs, evaluate impacts, and inform policy and investment decisions.

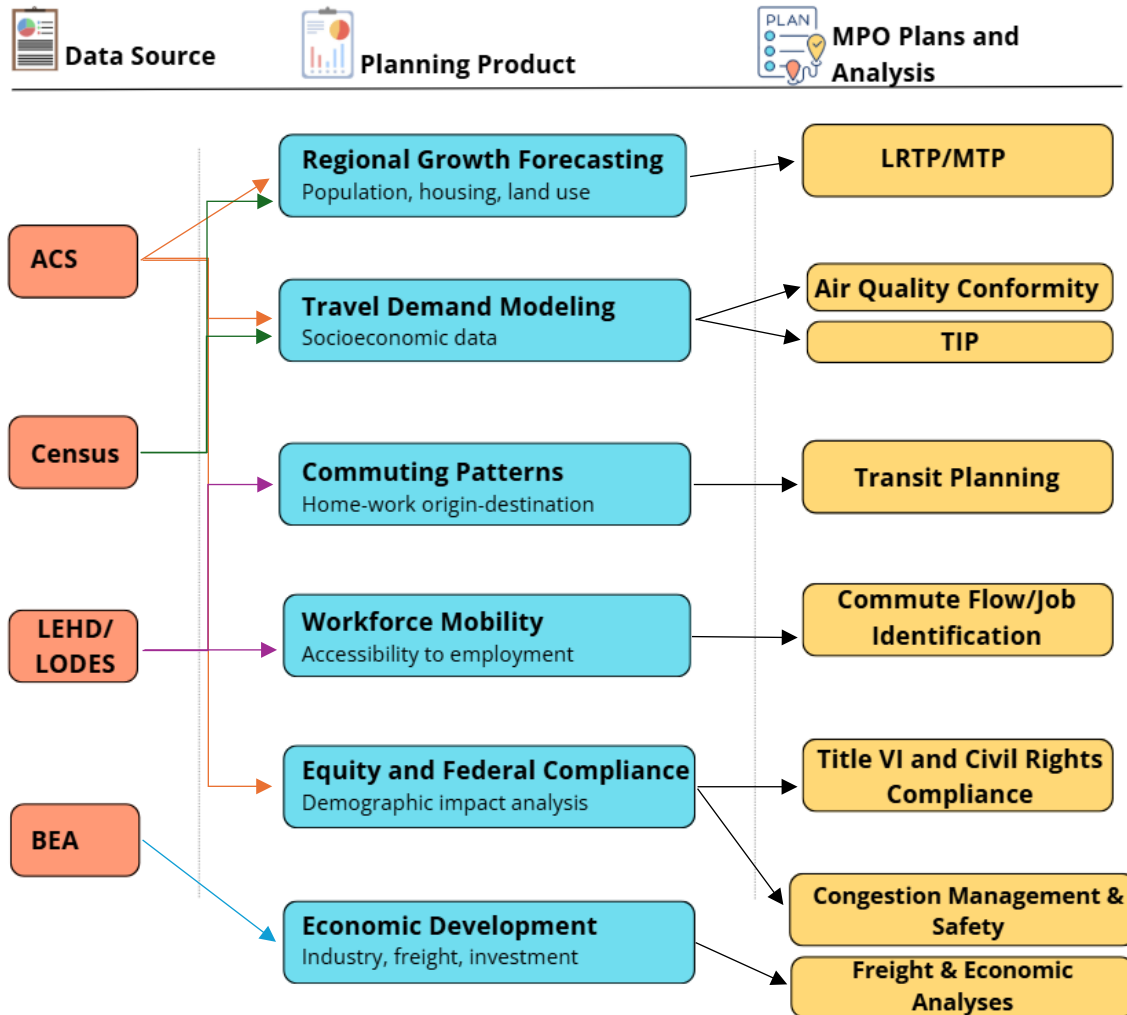
### Planning Impact

The most significant concern for MPOs is the **potential loss of small-area geographic and demographic detail that supports core planning functions**. Aggregating, rounding, or suppressing data would not just reduce statistical precision, but eliminate the local-level specificity that MPOs need to forecast population and household growth, create travel demand models, identify emerging transportation needs, and evaluate long-range infrastructure investments. When Census and ACS data are only available in broader categories, the socioeconomic inputs for MTPs may become less reliable, meaning MPOs would have to rely on more assumptions to support their planning activities.

Data sources that could be affected include the American Community Survey (ACS), Decennial Census products, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD), Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (LODES), and Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) regional statistics. These sources provide demographic, economic, workforce, and commuting data that MPOs use across a wide range of planning activities, including:

- Forecasting regional population, employment, household, and land use growth
- Developing and updating travel demand models
- Evaluating long-term transportation investments and infrastructure needs
- Updating socioeconomic inputs for MTPs and LRTPs
- Analyzing industry, workforce, and commuting patterns and how communities connect to employment centers
- Assessing transportation investment impacts on minority, low-income, elderly, and disabled populations in accordance with federal civil rights requirements
- Understanding regional freight activity and economic trends

## Data Sources and Potential MPO Implications Outline:



Beyond reduced precision, MPOs may also face **changes in data release schedules** as a result of the order's legal review requirement, making it harder to time planning processes around data availability. Over time, if federal data becomes less detailed or less reliable, agencies may become more reliant on private data sources, an outcome that could lead to additional planning costs, especially for smaller MPOs. This may also potentially introduce consistency problems across planning documents and federally required performance measures.

AMPO will continue to monitor this order and any implementation guidance issued by the Department of Commerce and the Census Bureau. Members who notice significant changes in data availability or quality should contact [Katie Economou](mailto:Katie.Economou), Legislative Director.

## [OMB Proposed Uniform Grant Regulation](#)



On May 29, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a proposed rule that would rewrite the government-wide framework for managing federal financial assistance across more than 30 Federal Agencies, including USDOT. Many of the changes in the proposed rule would build on previous executive orders, agency directives, and other administrative actions from the past two years in what OMB is describing as an effort to strengthen transparency, accountability, and oversight while reducing administrative burdens.

Comments are due by **July 13, 2026**. Please see [AMPO's analysis of the proposed rule](#) for additional context and reach out to [Katie Economou](#), Legislative Director, with any questions. **AMPO is also preparing formal comments informed by feedback from our committees and members.** If you have comments, examples, or concerns that you would like AMPO to consider as we develop our submission, please send them to Katie.

---



## Federal Roundup

*Congress: Reauthorization and Legislative Activity*  
*Administration & Agencies: USDOT & DOJ*

---



## Congress

### Congressional “Vibe” Check

**Reauthorization.** Reauthorization activity continues to accelerate as committees refine draft language that shapes the next surface transportation bill.

#### Where things stand:





- **House T&I.** The **BUILD America 250 Act** was passed out of committee on May 21 with a **62-2** vote following a nearly 15-hour markup that considered nearly 300 amendments. The **bill authorizes approximately \$580 billion**, with 90% available through formula funding, a significant shift from the IJA's heavier reliance on competitive grants.
  - Following a successful vote in the Ways and Means Committee, the legislation will be brought to the House Rules Committee, which will piece together the three surface transportation reauthorization bills passed by the House T&I Committee, [E&C Committee](#), and [Science, Space, and Technology Committee](#). Once complete, the legislation will wait for House leadership to move it to the House floor for consideration.

- **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.
  - Officials at USDOT have recently indicated that an extension is highly likely.

**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

-  [Senate Concerns on BUILD America 250 Act Funding and Administration Cancellations:](#) A group of Democratic senators led by Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA) called for safeguards in the next surface transportation authorization bill to ensure that congressionally approved transportation grants are implemented as intended, citing concerns about delays and cancellations affecting some projects funded under the IIJA. The senators also urged the administration to release previously awarded funds and proposed protections against future political interference in federal transportation grant programs.
-  [Overview of Local Funding in the BUILD America 250 \(BA250\) Act:](#) An analysis of the House T&I Committee’s BUILD America 250 Act finds that, while the bill consolidates competitive grant programs and places greater emphasis on formula funding, local governments would retain access to roughly \$23 billion in contract-authorized discretionary grants and continue receiving a similar share of suballocated formula funds. However, the absence of the IIJA’s advance appropriations would substantially reduce guaranteed discretionary funding for local communities, even as new bridge set-asides and other provisions create additional opportunities for locally owned infrastructure projects.
-  [Bridge Program Funding in the BA250 Act:](#) The BUILD America 250 Act would replace the IIJA’s Bridge Formula and Bridge Investment programs with new formula and competitive bridge programs that maintain similar overall funding levels while introducing updated allocation criteria, expanded set-asides for locally owned and off-system bridges, and new reporting requirements. The analysis notes that the revised structure aims to continue dedicated bridge investments and, if current spending levels are sustained, could significantly reduce the national bridge repair backlog over the coming decades.
-  [How the Ways and Means Committee Could Alter the BA250 Act:](#) As House lawmakers prepare tax provisions for the surface transportation reauthorization bill, stakeholders are urging changes including expanded private activity bond authority for transportation projects and repeal of the federal excise tax on heavy trucks, while the White House has also proposed

a temporary gas tax holiday. The article notes that such proposals would have implications for Highway Trust Fund revenues and financing, with no identified replacement for the estimated \$75 billion in lost receipts that would result from eliminating the truck excise tax.

- [🔗 BA250 Act Could Protect Rideshare Companies:](#) A provision in the House transportation reauthorization bill would shield rideshare companies such as Uber and Lyft from many forms of liability by classifying them as digital network operators rather than common carriers, prompting opposition from nearly 1,900 sexual assault survivors, consumer advocates, trial lawyers, and members of Congress who argue it would make it harder for passengers to seek justice after crashes, assaults, or harassment. Supporters contend that the measure would curb costly lawsuits and lower rideshare costs, while critics view it as part of a broader lobbying effort to reduce legal exposure and insurance expenses.
- 

## 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](#)

---

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

- [🔗 Where House Proposed BUILD Grant Programs Appropriation's Funding Would Go:](#) The House FY 2027 Transportation-HUD appropriations bill (See AMPO's Overview [Here](#)) would provide \$550 million for BUILD grants, with \$350 million reserved for projects in the 40 metropolitan areas that experienced the highest percentage population growth between 2020 and 2025, departing from the program's traditional balance between rural and urban awards. The provision would concentrate funding in rapidly growing regions, particularly in Florida, Texas, the Carolinas, and the Mountain West, while faster-growing areas represented by several members of the House THUD subcommittee would be among those eligible for preference.
- [🔗 Senate Introduces Farm Bill:](#) Senate Agriculture Committee Chair John Boozman (R-AR) released a draft farm bill that closely tracks the House Republican proposal, omitting several controversial provisions but retaining a requirement for states to begin sharing SNAP benefit costs, a key point of contention with Democrats. Sen. Boozman hopes to mark up the bill after the July Fourth recess, though the lack of concessions on nutrition policy could complicate efforts to secure bipartisan support.
- [🔗 Congress Passes Bipartisan Housing Bill but it Has Yet to be Signed by the President:](#) **The Senate passed the 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act 85-5 and the House followed 358-32**, sending the bipartisan bill, Congress's first comprehensive housing legislation in decades, to the White House for signature. The legislation aims to boost housing supply and

affordability while imposing the first-ever legal limits on large institutional investors purchasing single-family homes, a top White House priority. However, the White House canceled the scheduled signing ceremony, saying President Trump would withhold his signature until Congress passes the SAVE America Act elections bill, though Republican leaders expressed confidence that the bill would be signed within the 10-day window before it becomes law automatically.

---



## Administration & Agencies

### FTA

- [FTA Publishes Transit Asset Management \(TAM\) Plan Update Reminder](#): FTA is reminding public transit agencies that TAM plans must be updated every four years. Most agencies established their initial plans by October 1, 2018, making the next update due by October 1, 2026 (or four years from the date of any more recent full update completed after October 2022). The TAM program's goal is to help agencies achieve and maintain a state of good repair (SGR) for transit assets, ensuring systems are safe, reliable, and accessible. Agency CEOs and general managers play a central role in developing and formally approving the updated plan and must certify compliance in FTA grant applications.

FTA also flags a concerning trend: the share of revenue vehicles not in a state of good repair has grown steadily since 2023. Poorly maintained buses, trains, ferries, and vans directly affect riders through more frequent breakdowns and reduced on-time performance, eroding public trust in transit systems. FTA encourages agencies to use the updated TAM plan as a strategic tool to prioritize investments and navigate difficult trade-offs between long-term reliability and short-term operational needs. Resources and technical assistance are available at [transit.dot.gov/TAM](https://transit.dot.gov/TAM).

### USDOT

- [NHTSA to Investigate Tesla](#): NHTSA opened a special investigation into a fatal crash near Houston in which a Tesla Model 3 reportedly operating with an automated driving feature struck a home, killing a 76-year-old woman inside. The probe adds to a series of ongoing federal investigations into Tesla's driver-assistance and self-driving technologies as the company expands its robotaxi plans.

### DOJ

- [DOJ to Investigate Oil Companies](#): The White House recently directed the DOJ to investigate alleged gasoline price gouging, arguing that oil companies have not lowered pump prices in line with falling crude oil costs despite recent declines in fuel prices. The

announcement comes as the administration faces public concern over economic impacts from the Iran conflict, with gas prices remaining near \$4 per gallon and polls showing declining approval of the president's economic policies and military actions in the region.

---



## National News

- [🔗 Why the Highway Funding Formula is Dated:](#) An Eno Center for Transportation analysis argues that the federal highway formula has become increasingly disconnected from current conditions, with some fast-growing states seeing their share of funding decline while others with slower growth or declining populations have maintained or increased their shares. The article highlights how political constraints and the difficulty of redistributing formula funds have led Congress to preserve a system largely based on decades-old factors rather than updating it to reflect contemporary population, travel, economic, and infrastructure trends.
  - [🔗 Eno and CALSTART Issue Report to Lower Bus Costs and to Improve Bus Quality and Delivery:](#) A new report from Eno and CALSTART finds that extensive customization and limited competition in the US transit bus market contribute to higher costs, longer delivery times, and supply chain challenges, and recommends greater standardization, improved procurement transparency, and federal incentives to strengthen the industry. The report notes that maintaining some flexibility for local needs is important, but argues that coordinated action by Congress, USDOT, FTA, transit agencies, and manufacturers is needed to improve affordability and market stability.
- 

## 💰 Notice of Funding Opportunities

- [🔗 Rail Vehicle Replacement Program:](#) Provides funding to help fund capital projects to replace rail rolling stock.
  - **Deadline:** July 6, 2026
- [🔗 Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning:](#) The Pilot Program for TOD Planning helps support FTA's mission of improving America's communities through public transportation by providing funding to local communities to integrate land use and transportation planning with a new fixed guideway or core capacity transit capital investment.
  - **Deadline:** July 10, 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
- [🔗 Public Transportation on Indian Reservations \(Tribal Transit\) Competitive Program:](#) Provides funds for planning, public transportation capital projects, operating costs, job access



reverse commute projects, and the acquisition of public transportation service to tribes located in rural areas (those with a population under 50,000).

- **Deadline:** August 25, 2026

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

---

## Recent Editions

- [June 18 \(2026\)](#)
- [May 29 \(2026\)](#)
- [May 15 \(2026\)](#)
- [May 7 \(2026\)](#)
- [May 1 \(2026\)](#)
- [April 17 \(2026\)](#)
- [April 9 \(2026\)](#)
- [April 3 \(2026\)](#)
- [March 27 \(2026\)](#)

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