



The National Beat

October 16, 2026

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Feature Focus

AMPO's Analysis of the Proposed Policy Guidance for the Capital Investment Grant (CIG) Program and Comments

[AMPO Analysis and Request for Member Feedback on the FTA's Proposed Policy Guidance for the Capital Investment Grant \(CIG\) Program](#)

On Oct. 1, the [FTA issued a request for comments](#) on proposed policy guidance for the CIG program. The proposal includes earlier project development milestones, changes to how projects are rated, a new formula for determining the federal CIG share, expanded use of project warrants, stricter financial review, and other changes that could affect projects already in the pipeline.

At a high level, the following proposed changes were made:

- Earlier NEPA and project development milestones
- A 50 percent non-CIG funding commitment requirement before engineering phase for New Starts and Core Capacity projects
- Greater weight on cost effectiveness, mobility, and congestion relief
- New adjustments to the federal CIG share based on birth and marriage rates
- Expanded warrants that could simplify review for qualifying projects
- Stricter financial evaluation and annual engineering phase oversight
- Immediate application to projects already in the CIG pipeline, although approved CIG shares would remain locked for New Starts and Core Capacity projects already in the engineering phase.

[AMPO's Analysis of the Proposed CIG Policy Guidance](#)

Comments

To better understand how the proposed guidance may impact MPOs and CIG projects across the country, AMPO is developing comments to formally submit to the FTA. **Comments to FTA are due Nov. 16, 2026.** AMPO welcomes feedback from members to better understand how these changes could affect projects and regions.

To help inform AMPO's approach, **please send regional examples, concerns, or recommendations** to [Katie Economou](#), Legislative Director, and [Ryan Coady](#), Legislative Associate.

[Regional Water Quality and Infrastructure Planning Survey Update](#)

In collaboration with the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), AMPO gathered information from MPOs and regional organizations across the country on their involvement in water quality and water infrastructure planning.



The survey was developed to gain a clearer understanding of the types of water-related planning activities that regional organizations are undertaking, the funding sources that work, and the barriers or gaps that may limit regional participation. It also includes questions about the Clean Water State Revolving Fund's Water Quality Management Planning Grants included in Section 604(b)/205(j) regional pass-through program, including how these funds are distributed and used across states.

Initial results revealed that 87% of surveyed organizations are engaging in some form of water quality and infrastructure planning, whether it is watershed planning, flood mitigation planning, or stormwater management. **In the coming weeks, AMPO will be sharing a full report on the survey responses, detailing current practices across the country.**



Federal Roundup

Congress: Reauthorization and Legislative Activity

Administration & Agencies: USDOT, White House, Department of the Interior, & Census Bureau



Congress

Congressional “Vibe” Check

Reauthorization. Reauthorization discussions have slowed significantly as the November midterm elections approach and as Congress enters a month-long recess to campaign in-state. The recently passed continuing resolution extended the IIJA deadline to Dec. 11, giving Congress two paths forward: pass a full surface transportation reauthorization ahead of that deadline, or pass another extension that pushes reauthorization into 2027.

Where things stand:

- **House.** House T&I Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-WA) said that he wants to pass BA250 out of the House by the end of 2026, but if it moves during the next Congress, they will try to pass the legislation by June 2027.
 - *House T&I Subcommittees:* With House T&I Chair Sam Graves (R-MO) retiring, Republicans will look for new leadership. Currently, Rep. David Rouzer (R-NC) is likely to take the gavel. To replace Rep. Rouzer's position as Highways and Transit Subcommittee chair, Rep. Mike Bost (R-IL) is said to have expressed interest, while for Democrats, Rep. Salud Carbajal (D-CA) is said to similarly be interested in the position as either Subcommittee Ranking Member or Chair.



- **Senate.** EPW Chair Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) announced that her committee would not release legislative text for the next surface transportation bill until after the midterm elections, meaning reauthorization will have to wait until the November lame duck period.

The Buzz on Reauthorization

-  [The Potential New House T&I Leadership Members Discuss New Congress Priorities:](#) If Democrats take control of the House following November's Midterm elections, Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA) would become House T&I Chair. Rep. Larsen expressed that in the new Congress, he will prioritize passing the next surface transportation reauthorization. When asked about a timeframe, he stated that if the BA250 Act, which was passed out of committee in May, does not pass in 2026, he will target June 2027 to pass the legislation out of the House. Of significance, Rep. Larsen expressed specific interest in passing the Railway Safety Act, which was ultimately included within the BA250 Act. He also expressed interest in the upcoming FAA reauthorization as well as bipartisan FEMA reform. Lastly, he said his staff would also conduct oversight efforts of USDOT's delays and withholdings of certain infrastructure grants to determine whether the actions were based on political or policy reasons.

Similarly, Rep. David Rouzer (R-NC), who is expected to replace current Chair Sam Graves (R-MO) as either Ranking Member or Chairman, [expressed his priorities for the new Congress](#). Given his party remains in the majority, Rep. Rouzer expressed specific interest in China's influence over the US transportation system, especially their role in port infrastructure – an effort Rep. Rouzer said his party would prioritize oversight of. He further expressed interest in passing the BA250 Act out of the House before the new Congress or in early 2027 with few legislative changes to the existing text.

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.

 [119th Weekly Congress Legislation Tracker](#)

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

-  [Eno Center for Transportation Analysis of the Senate Permitting Bill's Impact on Environmental Reviews:](#) The [Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act \(BAAJA\) of 2026](#), the Senate recently introduced permitting bill, could narrow the use of the NEPA review process by exempting certain categories of projects, including qualifying repairs and replacements of transportation infrastructure from environmental review. Other federal environmental requirements would remain in place, but changes to Endangered Species Act



consultations, historic preservation reviews, and permitting timelines could reduce agency coordination and limit opportunities to address environmental impacts.

-  [The Need to Repair Bridges and the Expiration of IIJA Advance Appropriations:](#) The expiration of IIJA Division J advanced appropriations without an extension has left the Bridge Formula Program without the originally expected FY2027 funding, having potential implications for bridge replacement, rehabilitation, and preservation as infrastructure ages and deteriorates from severe weather. Although the House's [BUILD America 250 Act](#) proposes \$9.2 billion annually for bridge formula funding, states and localities continue to face significant repair needs, highlighting the importance of continued federal investment.
-  [Bipartisan Policy Center's Webinar and Explainer of the Senate Permitting Bill:](#) The Bipartisan Policy Center hosted a webinar and published an in-depth explanation on the [Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act \(BAAJA\) of 2026](#), introduced by a bipartisan group of senators on Sept. 30. The discussion and analysis looked at the bill's proposed changes to federal permitting processes, including potential effects on project delivery, communities, and the environment, as well as its likelihood for congressional passage. You can see the recording [here](#) and the slides [here](#).
-  [Senate To Consider Reconciliation Package During Lane Duck:](#) Sen. Bernie Moreno (R-OH) said Republicans plan to pursue a large reconciliation package after the midterm elections, potentially including a debt-ceiling increase, especially if Democrats gain control of one or both chambers. Rep. Rob Wittman (R-VA) has urged the Senate to pass the current [House framework](#). Sen. Moreno also called for Republicans to remain in session through the end of the year if they lose control of Congress.



Administration & Agencies

USDOT

-  [USDOT Announces \\$200 Million in INFRA Grants Focused on Truck Parking:](#) USDOT announced \$200 million in INFRA grants for 14 truck parking projects across 12 states to expand public truck parking, improve roadway safety, reduce fatigue-related crashes, and strengthen freight supply chains. Awards include funding for new and expanded parking facilities in Georgia, Iowa, North Carolina, Texas, and Wisconsin, building on more than \$300 million in federal truck parking grants awarded since April 2025.
-  [USDOT and FTA Reestablish the Transit Advisory Committee for Safety \(TRACS\) Charter:](#) USDOT and the FTA reestablished the 2026 to 2028 TRACS charter to review current challenges and innovations in public transportation safety and to provide recommendations to both the USDOT Secretary and the FTA Administrator. Recommendations will help guide safety improvements for the public transportation sector.

White House

-  [President Signs Executive Order Allowing Truckers to Use Dyed Fuel: The White House signed an Executive Order](#) on Oct. 5 directing the Treasury Department to defer diesel fuel tax



payments and to not penalize truckers for using untaxed, dyed diesel. The effort is estimated to save 24.3 cents per gallon, but implementation guidance remains unclear because a tax deferral does not eliminate the tax obligation or increase fuel production. The policy could temporarily divert fuel from farmers and home heating oil users, with a permanent reduction in diesel taxes needing a congressional action.

Department of the Interior

-  [Interior Department Looks to Review Off-Shore Wind Farm Project Compliance:](#) The Interior Department is looking to reopen its review of [Revolution Wind's](#) compliance with federal law, potentially threatening approval of the 704-megawatt offshore wind project that is already operational off Rhode Island. The effort could disrupt current negotiations for the recently introduced Senate permitting legislation, which Senate Democrats specifically included provisions in to protect the development of renewable energy projects.

Census Bureau

-  [The Census Bureau Schedules Release of the 2025 American Community Survey \(ACS\) 1-Year Estimates:](#) The Census Bureau plans on releasing the 1-year estimates for the 2025 ACS on Oct. 29. The data will be available for states, DC, Puerto Rico, congressional districts, MSAs, and other geographic areas. Publication thresholds are for populations of 65,000 or more for the 1-year estimates and populations of 20,000 or more are included in the 1-year supplemental estimates. A webinar will be held on Oct. 22 to discuss accessing the ACS data and you can register for it [here](#).



National News

-  [Bay Area to Consider Sales Tax Increase to Fund Transit Agencies:](#) A regional transit tax measure on the November ballot in five Bay Area counties would raise sales taxes by 0.5% to 1% to help fund transit agencies, including BART, Muni and Caltrain. The transit agencies warn that not passing the measure could lead to major service cuts and increased traffic congestion. Current polling shows 48% support the measure and 34% oppose it.
-  [Survey Report Finds that Americans Drive More than They Would Like:](#) A [Climate and Community Institute survey](#) found that 73% of US drivers feel they have no choice but to drive as much as they do, while 53% want more transportation options. The report also found that two in five respondents struggle with unexpected transportation costs. The study continues by arguing that decades of car-focused funding has limited alternatives for drivers and nondrivers. It recommends increased investment in transit and active transportation, changes to federal and state transportation policies, and local efforts to expand mobility choices.



Notice of Funding Opportunities



-  [**Prioritization Process Pilot Program \(PPPP\):**](#) The PPPP program provides discretionary grant funds that can be used to develop and implement a publicly accessible, transparent, data-driven prioritization process for the selection of projects in Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Plans (i.e., S/LRTP, MTP, RTP) and Transportation Improvement Programs (STIP/TIP).
 - **Deadline:** Oct. 30, 2026
-  [**Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program \(WCPP\):**](#) The WCPP provides funding to eligible entities for projects seeking to improve safety of the traveling public by reducing the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions (WVC) and, in doing so, improve habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species.
 - **Deadline:** Nov. 16, 2026

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

Recent Editions

- [October 9 \(2026\)](#)
- [October 2 \(2026\)](#)
- [September 25 \(2026\)](#)

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