

2009 NACE LEGISLATIVE REAUTHORIZATION POSITIONS & PRIORITIES

1. Support an aggressive Safety Program for making local roads safer through a “Toward Zero Fatalities” policy goal which focuses on the reduction of fatalities and serious injuries over the next transportation authorization by one-half. In this effort to achieve “Toward Zero Fatalities” the below specific legislative actions are recommended:

o Improve the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) and the ability of greater access to and assured funding from it for local road safety improvements.

Improving the HSIP should build on the success of the Safe Routes to School Program and should have a dedicated traffic safety professional in every DOT to assist implementation with federal safety funds for low cost safety improvements on low volume roadways and promote the use of HSIP funding for appropriate countermeasures deployed to reduce lane departure crashes and intersection crashes. We encourage the continuation of collecting crash data on all public roads and encourage investment on rural roadways regardless of the availability of state specific data. Nationwide data documents that over 50% of fatal crashes occur on rural roadways and we would encourage the HSIP to dedicate a minimum of 50% of the formula allocation to a central safety fund in each DOT to target investments on rural roadways with the highest fatality rate.

o Support the continuation of the High Risk Rural Road Program (HRRR) and recommend higher levels of funding. A \$1 billion program is recommended over the authorization.

o Implement Project Streamlining for Low Cost Safety Improvement Projects.

FHWA needs to modify regulations regarding the ability to access federal aid dollars for low cost safety improvement projects on local roads that do not involve capacity increases, acquisition of real estate, and are under \$500,000 in value. The current project review and approval system is prohibitive for small projects at the local level with limited staff to efficiently access available federal aid dollars. Regulatory and procurement relief is needed so local road professionals can execute safety improvement projects in a timely manner.

2. Implement Project Streamlining on All Federal-aid Projects. FHWA needs to modify regulations regarding the ability to access federal aid dollars for all projects on local roads that do not involve capacity increases, acquisition of real estate, and are under \$500,000 in value. The current project review and approval system is prohibitive for small projects at the local level with limited staff to efficiently access available federal aid dollars. Regulatory and procurement relief is needed so local road professionals can execute projects in a timely manner.

3. Preserve and enhance the set aside for Federal Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program (HBRRP). Raise the current limit of a minimum of 15% for off-system bridges to a new minimum limit of 25% or greater unless the State DOT and State Association representing local interests mutually agree (formally) to another method.

4. Support Congressional action for legislation to raise the federal gas tax in the next reauthorization an additional 10 cents to achieve a \$73 billion program by 2015. NACE would consider supporting other alternative methods to increase federal revenues to meet the above goals. NACE opposes the use of rescissions of unobligated highway contract authority as a means to offset highway related or non highway related budget activities.

The National Surface Transportation Financing Commission report supports fuel tax increases. In the longer term and to achieve a \$73 billion highway program by 2015, the federal gas tax would have to be raised by an equivalent of an additional 10 cents in 2010. Another long term option to increase revenues is to index the fuel tax to annual increases in the CPI, which would raise \$82 billion for the highway account in 2021.

The above are priority issues. Other issues are noted below for opportunities to keep in mind to improve the legislation or to outline concerns.

- **Expansion of funding support for the Local Technical Assistance Program, which is included in the Technology Deployment and Education Budget of FHWA. Raise funding from present \$11 million per year to \$15 to \$20 million a year from FY 2010 to 2015.**
- **Emergency Relief following disasters should be administered by one federal agency having a consistent and streamlined process to administer repair projects.**
- **Recommend support for the principals contained in H.R. 3611, the Metropolitan Congestion Relief Act.**
- **NACE supports the Clean Water Act provisions that protect wetland habitats and rivers and streams of the US, but does not support federal efforts to change the definition of the Clean Water Act from navigable waters to “waters of the US,” and also opposes federal efforts to further expand the authority and responsibilities of the federal agencies in regards to these waters.**
- **Remain opposed to issuance by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) of any standard or any other official guidance on performance measurement.**
- **Support greater use of automated traffic law enforcement.**
- **Support the use of motorcycle safety programs.**
- **Support the increase use of renewable and alternative fuels programs as long as such programs are not advanced at the expense of State and local highway agencies.**
- **Oppose any increases in vehicle size and weights as part of the next reauthorization unless set-aside funding is provided for the improvement of all roads.**