



NORTH CAROLINA™  
**NCPA**  
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION

Dear Members:

The 2016 State Legislative Session was the most successful Session for the Association and its Members in a very long time. This was a Short Session, which makes the accomplishments even more significant, especially those that involve additional funding for public transportation. A wrap-up is presented below.

### **Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)**

Unlike past Sessions, there was no attempt this year to change the NEMT service delivery model used in North Carolina. This by itself is cause for celebration and the Association will remain vigilant in monitoring any such legislation in the future. In the meantime, the best course of action is for each NEMT service provider to continue being as efficient and effective as possible in the delivery of this service. Despite the efforts of those who see an opportunity to profit while claiming they can do better, doing so will insure the facts remain in the favor of the current service delivery model.

### **Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP)**

An additional \$2,000,000 in funding was approved for distribution to rural transit systems according to the ROAP distribution formula. This is exceptional news because rarely does the Legislature approve additional funding for anything during the Short Session. This came about largely because the NCDOT PTD had previously documented the need for the additional funding, and this documentation was possible only because of the information provided by the rural transit systems. So everyone is encouraged to continue refining their future financial plans and submitting their operating statistics in a timely manner. Without a doubt, our rural systems are in need of additional financial resources. Demonstrating the need ahead of time is one of the best ways to actually obtain and maintain increased funding.

### **State Maintenance Assistance Program (SMAP)**

An additional \$2,000,000 in funding was approved for distribution to urban transit systems according to the SMAP distribution formula. This is just as exceptional as the additional ROAP funding for the very same reasons, and the same message for the future is also applicable. The provision of the additional funding is also very timely given the addition of a few transit systems into the ranks of the “urbanized” classification.

Also, there are currently plans to change the SMAP distribution formula in the very near future and all urban transit systems are encouraged to participate in the process by first focusing on what works best from a policy perspective for all Members collectively over

the long run, and then by evaluating the equitability of the formula in the actual distribution of funding.

### **Permanent Plates for Public Transportation Vehicles**

Permanent license plates may now be issued for any motor vehicle operated by public transportation providers receiving Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 (rural formula program) or Section 5307 (urban formula program) funding. For those transit system Members that previously could not obtain permanent license plates (i.e. non-profit and regional transit agencies), this is a very beneficial change. Money will be saved. An administrative “headache” will be eliminated. And most importantly, the provision of service to locations that require permanent plates for security reasons will be significantly streamlined.

### **Light Rail Funding Cap**

The \$500,000 cap in State funding for light rail projects was removed. Instead, State funding is now established at 10 percent of the total project cost, which is a positive development even though it does not meet the 25 percent State funding contribution in previous years but eliminated entirely last year. It is not known if the 10 percent funding and the required re-evaluation process will permit the planned projects to move forward in a timely manner. The Association, of course, will remain available to assist as best it can.

Thanks is extended to the Legislative Committee and to the Members who worked diligently behind the scenes to achieve the noted successes. Phone calls were made. Meetings were held. Follow-up information was provided. And at the appropriate times, the Association remained strategically silent so as to not give rise to any objection that otherwise might have been introduced by those who do not fully support the Association’s initiatives. This was particularly important with the passage of permanent license plates for public transportation vehicles operated in part with Federal funding.

As we are preparing for the next session, please contact the Association with your legislative issues and goals.

Thanks again. Please feel free to contact Stephen Mancuso, NCPTA Executive Director, at [director@nctransit.org](mailto:director@nctransit.org) with any questions that you might have.