



FAST Act Approval

The North Carolina Public Transportation Association (NCPTA) appreciates Congress' swift action and is very excited for the passage of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. The five-year bill allocates \$305 billion in funding for the nation's highways, railroads and transit. Over the past several years, it has been challenging for local agencies to develop long-term transportation plans due to the lack of certainty related to funding availability. The NCPTA is also pleased to see that a very important capital replacement program, Bus and Bus Facilities (Section 5339), includes an eighty-nine percent increase in funding over the life of the bill and has a competitive grant component that will further help address capital replacement needs. The NCPTA recognizes and appreciates this successful achievement in the public transportation arena, however, there is more work that needs to be done.

Fleet Replacement

Many of our state's transit systems have a need to replace vehicles that are currently at the end of or beyond their useful life. The state's urban annual unfunded bus replacement need is approximately \$27.5 Million and rural unfunded need is approximately \$7.5 Million. Aging vehicles in service are safe but require extensive maintenance. When the fleet gets past a certain age, the results are higher maintenance costs, reduced on-time performance, driver frustration and the need for more mechanics. Fleet age also impacts the ability of agencies to roll out new service because there are no available vehicles to serve new routes.

US Department of Labor (DOL) – FLSA Overtime Pay

The NCPTA has concerns related to the US Department of Labor's (DOL) proposed changes to the exemptions listed in the Fair Labor Standard Act's (FLSA) overtime pay requirements for executive, administrative, and professional employees (the "white collar exemptions"). The DOL proposes more than doubling the salary level required to qualify for the white collar exemptions, from \$455 per week/\$23,660 per year to \$970 per week/\$50,440 per year for a 113 percent increase. The agency also has proposed automatically increasing the minimum salary annually with only 60-day notice before the new level becomes effective with no opportunity for comment. The scale of the proposed increase is expected to have significant budgetary impacts across the state, both in public and private sectors. The Department's timeline to finalize the rule is July 2016, with compliance required later this year. The NCPTA opposes the increase, however should it be undertaken, it should be done gradually to mitigate significant budgetary impacts.

For more information related to subjects above please contact Stephen A. Mancuso at director@nctransit.org or 919-259-8009