

2016 State Legislative Priorities

State Transit Funding Assistance

The North Carolina Public Transportation Association (NCPTA) appreciates the North Carolina General Assembly's ongoing commitment to funding urban and rural public transportation across the state's 100 counties. We encourage the General Assembly to continue public transportation funding above existing levels in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016-2017 budget as well. The state's ongoing commitment to transit funding provides mobility and access for all persons, including our neediest citizens, to healthcare, employment, and many of life's other necessities. As our state's population continues to grow, the legislative commitment to public transportation is all the more critical to enable expanded mobility options in local communities. The state's transit funding commitment also enables local communities to leverage available federal transit resources in meeting existing daily needs while seeking to expand service options and focus on future mobility needs of our growing state. The state's public transportation program employs staff at 100 local agencies, which is also supported by over 50 direct private sector employers putting jobs and spending power back into the state and local economy.

Action: *Maintain state transit funding assistance above FY2015-2016 budgeted levels.*

Permanent Plates for Public Transportation Vehicles

Current statute requires the North Carolina Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to make non-permanent registration plates available for public transportation vehicles. This practice results in higher license plate costs to local government and inconsistent regulation interpretations received from various DMV offices on the type of license plates required by transit operators across the state. Therefore, as public grantees of the state, the NCPTA requests the General Assembly make the following modification to § 20-84, Permanent Registration Plates; State Highway Patrol:

"(b) Permanent Registration Plates. – The Division may issue permanent plates for the following motor vehicles: (2) (a) A motor vehicle operated by public transportation providers receiving Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 (rural formula program) or Section 5307 (urban formula program) funding."

Action: *General Assembly to enact the above recommended change to § 20-84, Permanent Registration Plates; State Highway Patrol.*

Removal of Light Rail Funding Cap

The NCPTA commends the North Carolina House of Representatives for their support of HB918 and encourages continued support of the state’s adopted Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) process in fully funding the light rail transit investment.

Action: *General Assembly to support the adopted STI process in removal of the light rail funding cap.*

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 transit annual unfunded bus replacement need is approximately \$27.5 Million and rural transit annual unfunded bus replacement 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.

Action: *General Assembly to expand state transit capital funding assistance to support 10% of the total replacement cost.*

North Carolina Highway Use Tax – Transit Exemption

Currently, vehicles registered in the state that weigh over 20,000 pounds are charged a flat minimum Highway Use Tax (HUT) fee of \$2,000. This flat fee has been increased from its previous amount of \$1,000. Given the cost burden placed on the local taxpayer, the NCPTA recommends the general Assembly exempt public transportation providers who receive Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 (urban formula program) or Section 5311 (rural formula program) funding from paying the HUT by making the following addition to § 105-187.6 (a), *Exemptions from Highway Use Tax*.

“(12) To public transportation providers receiving Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 (rural formula program) or Section 5307 (urban formula program) funding.”

Action: *General Assembly to enact the above recommended addition to § 105-187.6 (a), Exemptions from Highway Use Tax.*

Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)

As a cornerstone to rural transportation provision in each county of our state, North Carolina has been awarded and leads the nation in coordinating mobility resources very effectively to ensure the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Service (NCDHHS) funded program recipients and public transportation passengers share the same ride, where feasible, creating program efficiencies. The provision of Medicaid NEMT services leveraging the community's backbone transportation service and has proven to be a very cost effective model. We encourage the general Assembly to maintain the direct Medicaid NEMT service provision relationship between the NCDHHS and the county public/community transportation provider.

***Action:** General Assembly to maintain the direct Medicaid NEMT service provision relationship between the NCDHHS and the county public/community transportation provider.*

Contact Us!

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