



Policy Update

April 6, 2023

Congress – Both the House and Senate are out for two weeks for the Spring recess. They will return the week of April 17th. Before departing DC there was some notable activity. The House Subcommittee on Highways and Transit held a hearing on March 28 to discuss implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)/ the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

The Subcommittee examined the challenges and opportunities affecting implementation of the \$1.2 trillion legislation. The Subcommittee covered many different subjects, but several were addressed repeatedly – confusion over Buy America Build America (BABA) implementation, Federal permitting delays, supply chain disruptions, and maybe most importantly the impacts of inflation on the increased funding provided Congress. These subjects were important to Members on both sides of the aisle. Another subject that received attention was the issues/challenges the discretionary grant process creates and the cost of developing grant applications. The vast majority of proposals are unsuccessful and those few that are successful can take up to 18 months for the grant award to be finalized and funds obligated. There is concern that applicants are wasting time, money, and resources submitting an application that is more than likely to be unsuccessful. There were also members of the Subcommittee who praised the law and directed questions to witnesses meant to drive home the positive impacts and benefits of the programs across the country and in all Congressional districts.

Marc Williams, Executive Director, Texas Department of Transportation, testified on behalf of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). The written testimony can be found [here](#).

For more information, visit the Hearing webpage by clicking [here](#).

USDOT/FTA - Reminder: On March 23, FTA published guidance in a [Dear Colleague](#) to inform recipients about increased Federal support for certain planning activities under the Metropolitan Planning Program (MPP) and the State Planning and Research Program (SPRP). The increased match was included in the IIJA/BIL in the public transportation title of the bill and is intended to increase mobility through expanded access to public transportation in urbanized or rural areas with a lower population density or a lower average income than surrounding areas.

Grants

Reminder: U.S. Department of Transportation announced details for the first-of-its-kind pilot program to make roads safer, prevent wildlife-vehicle collisions, and improve habitat connectivity. The [Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program](#) (Wildlife Crossings Program) is a competitive grant program with the goal of reducing Wildlife Vehicle Collisions (WVCs) while improving habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species. Congress authorized this program in the IIJA/BIL for \$350 million over five years to be awarded by the U.S. Department of Transportation, through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

[Key Notices of Funding Opportunity | US Department of Transportation](#)

[Updated NOFO Schedule](#)

[Grants | US Department of Transportation](#)

[Bipartisan Infrastructure Law | FTA \(dot.gov\)](#)

[Bipartisan Infrastructure Law - FHWA | Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](#)

[Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Grant Programs | US Department of Transportation](#)

Links to FTA and FHWA Program Fact Sheets

FTA - [FTA Program Fact Sheets under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law | FTA \(dot.gov\)](#)

FHWA - [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law - Fact Sheets | Federal Highway Administration \(dot.gov\)](#)