



The National Beat

May 2nd, 2024

Federal Updates

On May 2nd, the Senate Appropriations THUD Subcommittee held a hearing on the FY 2025 USDOT budget request ([watch here](#)). During the hearing, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg discussed the Biden Administration's FY 2025 Budget request for the USDOT which totals \$146.2 billion, reflecting ongoing improvements in transportation safety, supply chain efficiency, and infrastructure renewal across the US.

On April 30th, the House Appropriations THUD subcommittee held a hearing on the FY 2025 USDOT budget request ([watch here](#)). During the hearing, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg highlighted the funding gaps in the FHWA's Emergency Relief Fund, which is currently facing a \$2 billion backlog of projects despite having only \$950 million available. This funding shortfall has become particularly pressing considering the recent collapse of Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge. Buttigieg has not proposed a specific supplemental appropriations package yet but has indicated that past emergency spending and the current unmet needs suggest that substantial funds will be necessary to address these challenges.

On April 30th, the House T&I Subcommittee on Highways and Transit held a hearing on fleet electrification efforts ([watch here](#)). evaluate the Biden Administration's push towards increasing the number of EVs focusing on the associated infrastructure challenges and regulatory impacts. Some members expressed concerns about the realistic feasibility of electrification goals, the economic impacts on consumers, and the potential risks of government overreach in market dynamics, emphasizing the need for a balanced approach that supports innovation without mandating specific outcomes. Others pointed to benefits surrounding job creation and improved environmental and health outcomes.

On April 25th, The House Appropriations Committee recently updated the guidelines for earmarked projects in the 2025 appropriations cycle, with a significant change limiting Economic Development Initiative grants to governmental bodies and public colleges and universities, excluding non-profits ([read here](#)). This adjustment follows previous political controversies involving earmarks for non-profit activities. The revised guidelines emphasize a range of infrastructure projects, maintaining a focus on transportation and housing development, while continuing to avoid earmarking funds from certain federal trust funds.

On April 24th, Representative Donald Payne Jr. from New Jersey passed away at age 65 due to a heart attack ([read here](#)). Serving as the ranking minority member on the House Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials, Payne was celebrated for his bipartisan efforts and significant contributions to transportation policy, including federal pipeline safety and rail worker rights.

Congressional Hearings, Meetings, & Markups



- On May 7th at 10:00 AM (ET), the House T&I Committee will hold a hearing to examine the reauthorization needs of the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration ([watch here](#))
- On May 2nd, the Senate Appropriations THUD Subcommittee held a hearing on the FY 2025 USDOT budget request ([watch here](#)).
- On May 1st, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee held a meeting to consider non-transportation bills and the nomination of NTSB, STB, FMC, and MWAAs nominations ([watch here](#)).
- On May 1st, the House T&I Committee held a hearing on FEMA's resilience programs ([watch here](#)).
- On April 30th, the House Appropriations THUD subcommittee held a hearing on the FY 2025 USDOT budget request ([watch here](#)).
- On April 30th, the House T&I Subcommittee on Highways and Transit held a hearing on fleet electrification efforts ([watch here](#)).
- On April 30th, the House T&I subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation held a hearing on the FY 2025 MARAD and FMC budget requests ([watch here](#)).
- On April 26th, the House T&I Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management held a hearing on FEMA's resilience programs ([watch here](#)).

USDOT

On May 1st, USDOT announced that the Build America Bureau approved its first Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) loan to provide \$26.8 million at ultra-low interest rates to support the Mt. Vernon Library Commons Project in Washington ([read here](#)).

On April 29th, NHTSA announced a final rule on automatic emergency braking (AEB) systems, which includes increasing pedestrian detection capabilities, to be standard on all new passenger cars and light trucks by September 2029 ([read here](#)). This new Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard is expected to prevent rear-end and pedestrian accidents.

On April 26th, FHWA allocated \$2.2 billion for Highway Infrastructure Programs (HIP) to state DOTs, including a specific \$100 million for the Appalachian Development Highway System under the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) ([read here](#)).

On April 25th, the FTA released a final Programmatic Assessment of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Transit Projects ([read here](#)). This Programmatic Assessment updates and supersedes previous versions, aligning with the latest guidance from the Council on Environmental Quality on considering GHG emissions in NEPA reviews. It serves as a NEPA streamlining tool, assessing GHG emissions for various transit projects and providing a data source for future environmental documents ([view the assessment here](#)).

On April 24th, FHWA announced \$148 million in grants to 11 states and Puerto through the Reduction of Truck Emissions at Port Facilities Grant Program to improve air quality and reduce pollution from truck emissions at US ports ([read here](#)).

On April 23rd, FTA published a Request for Information on proposed revisions to the Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program policy guidance ([read here](#)). This program is crucial as it provides major federal



support for high-capacity transit projects across the nation, including new and expanded subway, light rail, commuter rail, streetcar, and bus rapid transit systems. Comments are due by June 4th ([access here](#)).

On April 22nd, USDOT marked the 25th anniversary of its Climate Change Center, dedicated to policy, research, and action on climate change and transportation ([read here](#)). Additionally, in recognition of earth Month, on April 29th, FHWA celebrated several actions under the IIJA that have promoted greater sustainability in transportation planning and operations ([read here](#)).

National Transportation News

Maryland Senators Ben Cardin and Chris Van Hollen are pushing for additional funding for the Federal Highway Administration's emergency relief program to assist in rebuilding Baltimore's collapsed Francis Scott Key Bridge and support disaster recovery in other states ([read here](#)). The proposal aims to address the program's funding shortfall, which currently cannot meet the \$2 billion in anticipated needs, including those from the bridge disaster. Additionally, Cardin is advocating for legislation that would fully cover the costs of the bridge's recovery, diverging from the typical requirement of a 10% state match after 270 days.

A California bill initially designed to enforce "speed limiters" on new vehicles has been amended to require only a passive warning system ([read here](#)). Senator Scott Wiener modified SB 961 to mandate visual and auditory alerts for drivers who exceed speed limits, rather than physically restricting vehicle speed. The revised bill applies to half of new vehicles by 2029 and all by 2032, after feedback indicated resistance to active speed limitations. The bill, backed by the NTSB, has passed the Senate Transportation Committee, and now proceeds to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

NOFOs

Learn about federal grants available to MPOs and key NOFO information in AMPO's NOFO Tracker ([access here](#)). The Tracker is available on [ampo.org](#) under the "Resources" drop down.

New (MPO Eligible)

- Joint Office of Energy and Transportation's [Communities Taking Charge Program](#)
 - **Description:** Funding will address critical topic areas to expanding EV charging access to all drivers and riders.
 - **Deadline:** July 16, 2024 ([FOA here](#))
- FHWA's [Transportation Access Pilot Program \(TAPP\)](#)
 - **Description:** Pilot program to enhance the development of transportation access across different transportation modes and facilitate better connectivity to key destinations such as jobs, education, health care, and recreation
 - **Deadline:** June 7th, 2024 ([apply here](#))
- HUD's [Preservation and Reinvestment Initiative for Community Enhancement \(PRICE\) Competition](#)
 - **Description:** This funding supports MPOs in planning and implementing projects that enhance manufactured housing communities and align with HUD's comprehensive urban and regional planning objectives.
 - **Deadline:** June 5th, 2024; possible deadline extension to June 24th ([apply here](#))