

The National Beat

September 5th, 2024

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Federal Updates

On August 30th, the White House submitted a 30-page list of supplemental funding request to Congress as part of its push for a short-term spending bill to avoid a government shutdown by the upcoming September 30th deadline. This proposal sets the stage for negotiations on what programs will receive funding boosts under a continuing resolution, with lawmakers having just three weeks to pass the measure. The list includes proposed additions to the THUD appropriations funding to ensure the continuation of funding under the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant program. The specific provision would cancel remaining unobligated balances from previous allocations under *Public Law 117-328* and appropriate new budget authority to support the completion of the fiscal year 2020 and 2019 awards. [Read here.](#)

USDOT

On September 5th, FHWA Administrator Shailen Bhatt announced that he will depart the agency on September 9. Bhatt, who has overseen the distribution of billions in infrastructure funding under the IIJA will move to the private sector. Kristin White, the current Deputy Administrator, will step in as Acting Administrator. [Read here.](#)

On September 5th, USDOT more than \$1 billion in grants for over 350 communities through the SS4A program. The funding aims to improve road safety across rural and urban areas, including high-risk corridors. The announcement coincides with a report from NHTSA, which shows a 3.2% decline in traffic fatalities for the first half of 2024. [Read here](#) and view [awards here.](#)

On September 4th, USDOT and NHTSA convened a Distraction Action Forum to address the growing challenges of distracted driving. As part of the National Roadway Safety Strategy (NRSS), the forum explored ways to reduce roadway fatalities and advance research on vehicle and behavioral safety. During the event, USDOT also announced 17 new commitments from businesses and organizations to support the NRSS's goal of zero roadway deaths. [Read here.](#)

On August 27th, USDOT announced \$521 million in grants to expand the EV charging network across 29 states, eight Tribes, and DC. This funding, through the Charging and Fueling Infrastructure (CFI) Discretionary Grant Program and a 10 percent set-aside from the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Formula Program will support the deployment of over 9,200 EV charging ports, furthering the goal of a convenient, reliable, and equitable national network of EV chargers. Since the start of the administration, the number of publicly available EV chargers has doubled. [Read here](#).

On August 26th, FHWA opened applications for \$800 million in funding under the Low Carbon Transportation Materials (LCTM) Program. This program supports the use of low-carbon materials in transportation projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Applications are due by November 25th; MPOs are eligible to apply. FHWA will be hosting an informational webinar on the LCTM program on September 25th at 2:00 PM (ET) ([register here](#)). The webinar will provide general information on the program, including the application process and program requirements. There is no match requirement for this program. [Read here](#) and [view NOFO here](#).

On August 26th, FHWA distributed an additional \$8.7 billion in federal-aid highway funding to states via the annual “August redistribution” process. This brings the total spendable highway formula funding for FY 2024 to \$62.1 billion. States have until September 25 to obligate their share or risk losing the funds. The redistribution reflects the use-it-or-lose-it nature of the program, ensuring that unspent funds from allocated programs are put to use for highway projects across the country. [Read here](#).

Congressional Hearings, Meetings, & Markups

**House and Senate return post-labor day*

- On September 11th, the House T&I Committee will hold a hearing on the “Waters of the United States Implementation Post-Sackett Decision: Experiences and Perspectives”. [Watch here](#).
- On September 11th, the Senate EPW Committee will hold a hearing on the “Nomination of Matthew James Marzano, of Illinois, to be a Member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the term of five years expiring June 30, 2028”. [Watch here](#).

National Transportation News

On August 30th, the California Assembly passed SB59, which would authorize state regulators to require automakers to equip electric vehicles with bidirectional charging capabilities. This technology would allow EVs to send power back to the grid or supply energy to homes, offering a potential backup during grid-stressing events like heat waves. The bill now heads to the Senate for a final vote before reaching Governor Gavin Newsom's desk. [Read here](#).

Policy Analysis—August Redistribution

August Redistribution

On August 26th, FHWA redistributed \$8.7 billion in federal-aid highway funding to state DOTs through the August redistribution process. [Read here](#). This brings the total FY 2024 highway formula funding to \$62.1 billion. This redistribution provides funding, but the growing unobligated balances underscore a growing challenge in managing federal transportation funds sustainably and effectively.

Key Points

- States must obligate these funds by **September 25, 2024**, or risk losing them.
- The growing size of August redistributions (*now 14.5% of the total obligation authority*) places significant pressure on states to rush project approvals, potentially undermining long-term planning.

FY 24's Redistribution Outcomes

[Access FHWA's Chart of State-by-State Redistribution Amounts Here](#)

Highest recipients by redistribution amount.

- Texas received the largest share at \$1.17 billion (13.43% of total).
- California received \$622 million.
- Florida and New York each received around \$400 million.

Lowest recipients by redistribution amount

- Wyoming received \$52.3 million.
- Rhode Island received \$19.3 million.
- Alaska received \$19.2 million.

Potential Policy Implications

- The increasing reliance on last-minute fund redistributions highlights the need for a more stable and predictable funding model.
 - AASHTO has raised concerns that the current approach may hinder thoughtful transportation investment planning and development.
- *Policymakers may consider reforms to streamline the redistribution process, ensuring funds are effectively used without jeopardizing project quality.

**Note: Read AMPO's August 8th National Beat Policy Analysis [here](#) for the Senate THUD bill's proposed fix to the August Redistribution process*

NOFOs

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

New (MPO Eligible)

- FHWA's [Low Carbon Transportation Materials \(LCTM\) Program](#)
 - **Description:** This program supports the use of low-carbon materials in transportation projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Applications are due by November 25th; MPOs are eligible to apply.
 - FHWA will be hosting an informational webinar on the LCTM program on September 25th at 2:00 PM (ET) ([register here](#)).
 - **Deadline:** 11/25/2024

- HUD's [Pro Housing Program](#)
 - **Description:** to help communities remove barriers to affordable housing production and preservation, improve housing strategies, and develop sustainable housing policies.
 - **Deadline:** 10/15/2024