

# **Freight Stakeholders Reauthorization Agenda Item**

## **The Borders and Corridors Programs**

### **Proposal**

Significantly increase funds for an expanded corridor/border and gateway program.

### **Background**

Recognizing the unprecedented and ever-growing demands international trade is placing on our nation's transportation infrastructure, Congress established the National Corridor Planning and Development Program (NCPD) and the Coordinated Border Infrastructure Program (CBI) often referred to as the Borders and Corridors Program. Section 1118 and 1119 of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (TEA-21) authorized \$140 million annually over a five-year period to fund planning, project development, construction and operation of projects that serve border regions near Mexico and Canada and high priority corridors throughout the United States. While there are two programs authorized, the funding was combined.

Since the beginning of the programs, for every dollar available more than fifteen dollars has been requested. Much of this funding has gone to the planning, design and engineering of future projects. There is a large unmet demand for funding and a growing backlog of projects that are "shelf ready." The U.S. Department of Transportation projects that the volume of freight movements in the U.S. will double over the next 20 years. As a result, demands for freight related infrastructure funding will increase even further. Other programs, such as loan guarantees through TIFIA or its successors, will help in the funding, but a core level of support is necessary to assure progress on these projects of national economic importance.

### **Specifics**

First and foremost, to meet the high level of demand, funding for the Borders and Corridors Program should be increased and projects should be prioritized based on volume and congestion resulting from freight movement to ensure limited dollars are focused on critical corridors, gateways and intermodal infrastructure.

In addition, project eligibility should be expanded to include freight gateways and hubs, including non-border gateways and hubs. For example, according to Chicago Metropolitan Planning Council "about one-third of the nation's rail and overland truck cargo moves through the Chicago region" and therefore should merit federal assistance in meeting freight infrastructure needs. The Borders and Corridors Program should serve as a vehicle for promoting investment in intermodal connectivity at ocean, inland and border gateways.

The designated "high priority" corridors eligible for funding under the Corridors Program should be reexamined to ensure that projects with greatest opportunities for economic returns are not precluded from funding. Many important projects in need of funding do not fall in one of the 43 priority corridors designated under TEA-21.

### **Funding**

A funding level of \$2 billion annually would provide funding to meet the historic level of requests since the inception of the Borders and Corridors program in TEA-21.

### **Benefits**

Greater investment in the Borders and Corridors Programs will help ensure America's economic future in the global market place. A robust freight system that supports international trade results in job growth, as well as local, state and federal tax revenue. In addition, easing congestion will help protect our environment from harmful emissions.