

Freight Stakeholders Reauthorization Agenda Item

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Proposal

Proposal

Increase funding and promote the use of the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) for freight projects that reduce congestion and improve air quality.

Background

CMAQ was designed to fund projects that will help reduce transportation-related emissions. Although it is clear that in many situations freight projects can make a significant contribution to the achievement of Clear Air Act goals, few freight projects have been funded, in part because the emphasis has been primarily to address passenger needs and the interpretation of rail freight eligibility has not been uniform across the country. Over the years, CMAQ funds have been used to support the use of public transportation, promote efficient traffic movement, support educational campaigns, promote ride-sharing, bicycling, and pedestrian programs, fund automobile inspection and maintenance programs and fleet conversion efforts, among many other purposes.

Specifics

CMAQ funding should be dedicated to projects that can be shown to reduce congestion or improve air quality and many freight projects can demonstrate this ability. Because congestion and capacity constraints in all modes involving freight transportation are delaying and disrupting freight shipments, the result is increased costs borne by everyone. Therefore we must look at new and innovative ways to mitigate congestion that will result in both efficiency and environmental benefits. Total funding for CMAQ should be increased and the use of CMAQ funds for freight projects should be clarified and strongly encouraged.

Funding

Funding should continue to be distributed according to a formula based on population and severity of air pollution.

Benefits

Public policy should support the expenditure of federal dollars to mitigate congestion in urban areas so as to improve air quality.