

Freight Stakeholders Reauthorization Agenda Item

Expand Freight Planning Expertise at the State and Local Level

Proposal

Provide increased funding for State and local governments to enable the hiring and training of professional freight planners

Background

Most transportation planning is focused on meeting the mobility needs for the passenger. However, there is an overwhelming need for better freight planning expertise at the State, local and metropolitan levels. This lack of freight planning expertise is particularly ill-advised as there is a developing consensus that freight transportation infrastructure is considerably underfunded, and plays a key role in homeland security.

Without sufficient funding, State and local governments will not be able to employ and train the number and quality of freight planners needed to perform the levels of analysis necessary for making good, cost-effective decisions. Without better freight planning expertise, freight will continue to suffer from a misallocation of resources, and the challenges that freight transportation providers face will continue to multiply.

Specifics

In the upcoming highway reauthorization legislation, Congress should provide significantly increased funding to the States and localities to considerably increase their employment and training of freight planners.

Benefits

Greatly improved coordination of highway resources and freight –related transportation needs will produce better transportation investment decisions and an improved freight transportation system that will allow the United States to take advantage of international trade and increased economic activity.