

2009 TDA Fly-in
Summary of Positions

Highways & Transit / Surface Transportation Authorization

- Support a bold vision for the next surface transportation authorization. One that :
 - » Addresses documented needs.
 - » Provides short-term funding increases through raising the gas tax and facilitates a rapid transition to a user fee that is not dependent on the type of fuel powering the vehicle, possibly expanded tolling or a vehicle miles travelled fee.
 - » Takes into account the needs of more rural states like Wisconsin.
 - » Maintains trust fund firewalls and multi-year contract authority.
 - » Allows states flexibility to fund their share of transportation investment, including tolling of publicly owned new and existing lanes, congestion pricing and public private partnerships.
 - » Streamlines the process, significantly reducing the cost to deliver projects.
- Take necessary steps to shore up the Highway Trust Fund to allow current programs to continue until the next authorization is enacted. Uncertainty undermines efficient delivery of transportation projects.
- Provide adequate Bus Capital funding by supporting Wisconsin's 2010 statewide transit capital earmark – preferably \$20 million to address the backlog of needs.
- Support proposed legislation that seeks to maintain or restore federal transit operating assistance for small urban systems serving populations over 200,000 with fewer than 100 vehicles. Nationally, this effort is known as the “100 Bus Coalition”.
- TDA thanks the members of the delegation who supported the transportation investment included in ARRA as a means to create jobs and as a first step in addressing critical transportation needs.

Aviation

- Pass a comprehensive, long-term (minimum of four years) Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) authorization, similar to H.R. 915, this fiscal year that includes reauthorizing AIP at \$4 billion for 2010 and a \$100 million increase in investment each year. While short-term extensions are necessary to keep the system going, they don't provide the kind of certainty necessary for long-term planning and investment.
- Appropriate \$4 billion for the Airport Improvement Program in 2010.
- Maintain the current system of taxes and fees, perhaps with moderate increases. New user fees on general aviation are unnecessary and would not be beneficial to Wisconsin.
- Increase general fund support to a minimum of 25% of FAA funding, acknowledging that the benefits of the air transportation system extend well beyond the direct users of the system.
- Support raising the Passenger Facility Charge to \$7 and providing airports more flexibility in the use of these funds.
- Support the modification in the apportionment formula for general aviation airports as proposed in H.R. 915. The change would improve funding for Wisconsin's nearly 90 general aviation airports. Under current law the State Apportionment formula provides \$5 million annually, which only allows the state to address two significant general aviation projects per year.

Passenger Rail

- Fully fund Amtrak and intercity passenger rail through the appropriations process up to the levels authorized under PL 110-432, the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 which also includes the Passenger Rail Investment Act of 2008.
- Support President Obama's budget proposal for \$1 billion intercity passenger rail capital funding for states (80% federal and 20% state cost sharing) annually over the next 5 years.
- Support the recommendations of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission to provide at least \$5 billion annually in intercity passenger rail capital funding for states (80% federal and 20% state cost sharing) over the next six years as a dedicated funding program within the surface transportation authorization bill.
- Support high-speed rail in Wisconsin, and Governor Doyle's plan to seek federal stimulus funds to pay for the Milwaukee-to-Madison passenger train line.

Freight Rail

- Support the Freight Rail Infrastructure Capacity Expansion Act of 2009 (H.R. 272). This legislation would provide a 25 percent tax incentive to any company (not just railroads) investing in new track, terminals or other projects that increase the capacity of the freight rail network.
- TDA supports a strong freight rail industry and encourages Congress to carefully consider any legislation that might jeopardize the growth of the industry and the role it plays in the economy.

Ports, Harbors and Waterways

- Provide adequate funds in the 2010 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill to address the backlog of dredging projects at Wisconsin ports.
- Appropriate federal funds in 2010 for the following projects authorized by Water Resource Development Act of 2007:
 - » Soo Lock Reconstruction: This approximately \$350 million project will provide a second 1,000-foot lock and refurbish the existing lock to provide a reliable link between the Great Lakes and the world. Congress provided an initial \$17 million in 2009. Congress should appropriate an additional \$108 million in 2010 to continue work on the project.
 - » Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway: Congress has authorized \$3.72 billion for improved navigation and ecosystem restoration for the Upper Mississippi River System. An appropriation of at least \$35 million is requested for this project in 2010.
- Adopt legislation establishing consistent national standards for the treatment of ships' ballast water to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species and including a federal research program to develop ballast water treatment technology.
- Support H.R. 528, legislation exempting the movement of certain cargo from the U.S. Harbor Maintenance Tax as a means of encouraging the movement of freight from congested surface transportation systems to marine alternatives.

2009 TDA Fly-in
**Highways & Transit
Surface Authorization**

Background

Wisconsin relies on federal funding to provide 25-30% of the state's transportation budget. The current multi-year surface transportation authorizing legislation, the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), provided Wisconsin approximately \$630 million annually for highways and \$65 million for transit. SAFETEA-LU expires in September of this year.

The Highway Trust Fund is in a precarious position. Congress and the Bush Administration transferred \$8 billion from the general fund last year to keep it afloat, and it is possible another infusion will be needed before September. Without additional revenue, a 50% cut in highway investment will occur in 2010 and a similar cut to transit in 2011, resulting in the loss of over 400,000 jobs. In order to simply maintain current levels over the next six years, \$53.5 billion more is needed for highways and \$13.5 billion for transit. This does not begin to close the gap between current funding and system needs documented by both commissions appointed by Congress.

The Obama Administration and members of Congress made the strong case for transportation investment during the debate over the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Those arguments about transportation investment being vital to repair our crumbling infrastructure and to create and sustain jobs were accurate and necessitate bold action for this upcoming authorization. The stimulus bill jump-started reinvestment in transportation, but without a federal authorization that provides ongoing funding and a comprehensive vision, it will not accomplish lasting economic revitalization.

TDA Position

- Support a bold vision for the next surface transportation authorization. One that :
 - » Addresses documented needs.
 - » Provides short-term funding increases through raising the gas tax and facilitates a rapid transition to a user fee that is not dependent on the type of fuel powering the vehicle, possibly expanded tolling or a vehicle miles travelled fee.
 - » Takes into account the needs of more rural states like Wisconsin.
 - » Maintains trust fund firewalls and multi-year contract authority.
 - » Allows states flexibility to fund their share of transportation investment, including tolling of publicly owned new and existing lanes, congestion pricing and public private partnerships.
 - » Streamlines the process, significantly reducing the cost to deliver projects.
- Take necessary steps to shore up the Highway Trust Fund to allow current programs to continue until the next authorization is enacted. Uncertainty undermines efficient delivery of transportation projects.
- Provide adequate Bus Capital funding by supporting Wisconsin's 2010 statewide transit capital earmark – preferably \$20 million to address the backlog of needs.
- Support proposed legislation that seeks to maintain or restore federal transit operating assistance for small urban systems serving populations over 200,000 with fewer than 100 vehicles. Nationally, this effort is known as the "100 Bus Coalition".
- TDA thanks the members of the delegation who supported the transportation investment included in ARRA as a means to create jobs and as a first step in addressing critical transportation needs.

2009 TDA Fly-in **Air Authorization & 2010 Aviation Funding**

Background

Airports, aviation and related industries in Wisconsin account for \$2.1 billion of economic activity, supporting over 41,000 jobs with a payroll of \$775 million. The economic impact is even greater if the income produced by existing businesses that depend on air cargo shipments is taken into account. Between 1997 and 2001, 85% of all new and expanding manufacturing firms located within 15 miles of the state's 49 jet-capable airports.

Federal funds make up 60-70% of Wisconsin's aviation program and are allocated to both commercial passenger service and general aviation airports. Wisconsin received on average \$60 million per year under the four-year aviation authorization (Vision-100), which expired September 30, 2007. Funding for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) and the related taxes have been extended through September 30, 2009.

TDA Position

- Pass a comprehensive, long-term (minimum of four years) FAA authorization, similar to H.R. 915, this fiscal year that includes reauthorizing AIP at \$4 billion for 2010 and a \$100 million increase in investment each year. While short-term extensions are necessary to keep the system going, they don't provide the kind of certainty necessary for long-term planning and investment.
- Appropriate \$4 billion for the Airport Improvement Program in 2010.
- Maintain the current system of taxes and fees, perhaps with moderate increases. New user fees on general aviation are unnecessary and would not be beneficial to Wisconsin.
- Increase general fund support to a minimum of 25% of FAA funding, acknowledging that the benefits of the air transportation system extend well beyond the direct users of the system.
- Support raising the Passenger Facility Charge to \$7 and providing airports more flexibility in the use of these funds.
- Support the modification in the apportionment formula for general aviation airports as proposed in H.R. 915. The change would improve funding for Wisconsin's nearly 90 general aviation airports. Under current law the State Apportionment formula provides \$5 million annually, which only allows the state to address two significant general aviation projects per year.

2009 TDA Fly-in Passenger Rail

Background

The National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission's report highlights intercity passenger rail as the missing link in the nation's surface transportation system. The Commission recommends increased investment in passenger rail in order to mitigate growing congestion of the air and highway transportation systems and to help meet important national energy and environmental goals. An estimated \$357 billion is needed over the next 40 years to maintain existing Amtrak lines and to build or upgrade passenger rail routes to establish "regional service" in high-growth intercity corridors.

In Wisconsin, Amtrak's Hiawatha route offers an affordable and reliable option for those traveling the 85 miles between Milwaukee and Chicago. The Hiawatha has growing ridership and continues to earn one of the best on-time ratings among the Amtrak routes. Wisconsin has supported the service financially since 1989 and currently funds approximately 75% of the non-federal subsidy. Illinois funds the remaining 25% of the non-federal subsidy.

High-speed rail is a key next step for intercity passenger rail in Wisconsin. A 110 mph Milwaukee-to-Madison high-speed rail corridor would be part of the proposed Midwest Regional Rail System, envisioned as a 3,000 mile Midwest passenger rail network radiating from Chicago and serving nine states. High-speed rail hinges on significant federal funding.

The stimulus bill passed earlier this year includes \$8 billion for high-speed and intercity passenger rail. President Obama's 2010 budget builds on this passenger-rail investment by proposing a new \$1 billion per year appropriation over the next five years for intercity rail development.

TDA Position

- Fully fund Amtrak and intercity passenger rail through the appropriations process up to the levels authorized under PL 110-432, the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 which also includes the Passenger Rail Investment Act of 2008.
- Support President Obama's budget proposal for \$1 billion intercity passenger rail capital funding for states (80% federal and 20% state cost sharing) annually over the next 5 years.
- Support the recommendations of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission to provide at least \$5 billion annually in intercity passenger rail capital funding for states (80% federal and 20% state cost sharing) over the next six years as a dedicated funding program within the surface transportation authorization bill.
- Support high-speed rail in Wisconsin, and Governor Doyle's plan to seek federal stimulus funds to pay for the Milwaukee-to-Madison passenger train line.

2009 TDA Fly-in Freight Rail

Background

The nation's freight rail network, with more than 140,000 miles of track, moves more than 2.2 billion pounds of commodities each year. Unlike roads which are primarily publicly funded, most rail infrastructure is privately operated and maintained.

Wisconsin is served by 12 railroads including four major (Class I) railroads. Each year these railroads haul more than 150 million tons of cargo valued at over \$4 billion. Freight volumes in Wisconsin increased 26 percent from 1991 to 2000 and are projected to increase another 51 percent by 2020.

Since the 1980's and the Staggers Act, which significantly reduced government regulation of the industry, freight rail is:

1. More affordable. Average rail rates have dropped by half, resulting in billions of dollars of savings yearly for consumers.
2. Safer. Accident rates and employee injury rates have fallen by 70 percent. Rail's casualty rate is now the lowest in the transportation industry.
3. More productive. Rail's market share increased for the first time in decades. More and more shippers have chosen to ship by rail.
4. Growing. Railroads have invested more than \$420 billion in their own systems, to maintain and renew the nation's 140,000 miles of tracks.

Rail service provides a low cost transportation alternative for the high volume, lower value commodities that are essential to many of Wisconsin's industries. The availability of rail service can be an important factor in retaining and attracting certain businesses.

Rail is also the most environmentally friendly, most fuel-efficient form of ground transportation. Freight rail eases highway congestion as one intermodal train can carry 280 truck trailers – the equivalent of more than 1,000 automobiles in terms of highway congestion. In addition, rail moves a ton of freight more than 400 miles on just one gallon of fuel and emits fewer pollutants than transportation by truck.

TDA Position

- Support the Freight Rail Infrastructure Capacity Expansion Act of 2009 (H.R. 272). This legislation would provide a 25 percent tax incentive to any company (not just railroads) investing in new track, terminals or other projects that increase the capacity of the freight rail network.
- TDA supports a strong freight rail industry and encourages Congress to carefully consider any legislation that might jeopardize the growth of the industry and the role it plays in the economy.

2009 TDA Fly-in
Ports, Harbors & Waterways

Background

Wisconsin's 20 commercial ports offer manufacturers and shippers a major transportation alternative many states cannot provide. A commodity-flow study conducted by Reebie Associates for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation in 2002 indicated that Wisconsin's commercial ports annually handle some 44 million tons of cargo with an estimated value of more than \$7 billion. According to a 2004 economic overview of Wisconsin's commercial ports published by WisDOT, our state's ports support 11,387 jobs and annually generate more than \$1.3 billion in economic output and nearly \$377 million in personal income.

Increased federal investment is vital to maintaining and modernizing the U.S. water transport system. When the Water Resource Development Act of 2007 (WRDA) was enacted, it became the first such authorizing legislation since 2000. The act authorized \$23 billion and hundreds of water projects, including seven 1,200 foot locks on the Upper Mississippi and Illinois rivers and Soo Lock reconstruction. Funding still needs to be provided during the annual appropriations process.

TDA Position

- Provide adequate funds in the 2010 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill to address the backlog of dredging projects at Wisconsin ports.
- Appropriate federal funds in 2010 for the following projects authorized by WRDA of 2007:
 - » Soo Lock Reconstruction: This approximately \$350 million project will provide a second 1,000-foot lock and refurbish the existing lock to provide a reliable link between the Great Lakes and the world. Congress provided an initial \$17 million in 2009. Congress should appropriate an additional \$108 million in 2010 to continue work on the project.
 - » Upper Mississippi River and Illinois Waterway: Congress has authorized \$3.72 billion for improved navigation and ecosystem restoration for the Upper Mississippi River System. An appropriation of at least \$35 million is requested for this project in 2010.
- Adopt legislation establishing consistent national standards for the treatment of ships' ballast water to prevent the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species and including a federal research program to develop ballast water treatment technology.
- Support H.R. 528, legislation exempting the movement of certain cargo from the U.S. Harbor Maintenance Tax as a means of encouraging the movement of freight from congested surface transportation systems to marine alternatives.