

FAST ACT- OREGON

FIXING AMERICA'S SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT

Prepared by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Democratic Staff
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We need long-term investment in infrastructure to create jobs and rebuild America. With 14.2 million workers directly employed in infrastructure jobs and the average American family spending thousands per year on transportation costs – the second-greatest household expense next to housing – the value of rebuilding and renewing our nation's infrastructure is clear. Finally, after years of gridlock and short-term extensions, Congress will consider H.R. 22, the “Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act), a bipartisan, bicameral long-term reauthorization to fund highway, transit, highway safety, motor carrier safety, hazardous materials safety and passenger rail programs and projects.

FAST ACT KEY POINTS

- ***Provides Long-term Funding:*** Provides **\$281 billion**, funded from the Highway Trust Fund, over five years for highway, transit, and highway safety programs.
 - ***Oregon Highways Funding:*** Over the next five years, Oregon will receive over \$2.6 billion in federal highway funding to rebuild and replace our crumbling highways.
 - ***Oregon Transit Funding:*** Over the next five years, Oregon will receive over \$500 million in federal transit funding to fix and expand our transit systems.
 - ***DeFazio Formula Fix:*** In 2005, DeFazio negotiated a change in the highway funding formula and as a result, Oregon receives more in gas tax dollars than it contributes to the Federal Highway Trust Fund. Under the prior formula, Oregon received 99 cents for every \$1 contributed. Under the formula DeFazio secured, Oregon now receives as much as \$1.25 for every \$1 contributed.
 - Oregon will receive an additional \$325 million in the FAST Act because of the DeFazio-Oregon formula fix.
- ***Boosts Bus Funding:*** The FAST Act injects a total of \$3.7 billion over five years into the bus program—a 75 percent increase over current levels. This critical funding will alleviate traffic and provide local agencies with the money they need to buy additional buses and expand operations to better connect communities. This was a top priority for Lane Transit District and Salem-Kaiser Transit District. The FAST Act also establishes numerous innovative options for transit agencies to lower the cost of bus procurement by enabling bulk purchases, state funding pools, and state purchase schedules.
- ***Supports Bicycle/Pedestrian Projects:*** The FAST Act increases funding for on- and off-road bike and pedestrian projects from \$819 million to \$850 million over the life of the bill. The bill also creates a new non-motorized (bicycle/pedestrian) safety grant to incentivize states to decrease pedestrian and bicycle deaths.
- ***Boosts Funding for Amtrak:*** Provides \$8 billion over the next five years for Amtrak and \$2.2 billion for three new grant programs: a state-of-good-repair program (\$1 billion); a competitive rail safety and infrastructure grant program (\$1.1 billion); and, a program to provide operating assistance to passenger rail providers to initiate or restore rail service (\$100 million). Capital projects that improve short-line infrastructure are eligible for some grants and 25 percent of the program's total funding must go toward rural areas, which could help

the Port of Coos Bay as they look for funding opportunities to make repairs to the Coos Bay Rail Link. The bill creates an Amtrak pilot program requested by Oregon to have local food and beverages served on state-supported trains, like the Cascades.

- ***Strengthens Hazardous Materials' Emergency Response:*** Protects local communities and emergency responders by requiring railroads to provide advanced notification and information on trains containing high-hazard flammable material to each state emergency response commission and identification of the routes over which these materials will be transported. It requires retrofit of an additional 40,000 tank cars to better protect cars and prevent catastrophic spills in accidents. These were priorities for Oregon, which has seen an increase in crude oil shipments by rail over the past few years.
- ***Explores Future Funding Mechanisms:*** Provides \$20 million a year to enable states to test and experiment with innovative ways to fund needed infrastructure improvements, including Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) mechanisms, which are critical to identifying a sustainable, long-term revenue stream for surface transportation investment.
- ***Boosts Funding for Federal Lands:*** Increases annual funding for the Federal Lands Transportation Program from \$300 million under current law to \$375 million by FY 2020. Provides a set-aside for the United States Forest Service (starts at \$15 million and ramps up to \$19 million by FY 2020). Includes a General Fund authorized program for Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal projects, authorized at \$100 million per year. The Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) was established to improve the transportation infrastructure owned and maintained by the following Federal Lands Management Agencies: National Park Service (NPS), US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), USDA Forest Service (Forest Service), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).
- ***Bypasses Congress to Increase Transportation Investments:*** This legislation isn't perfect. Unfortunately, it doesn't provide the level of investment needed to repair or rebuild our aging system of roads and bridges. It does, however, include a critical provision championed by DeFazio that would allow for automatic adjustments and increased investments if Congress deposits additional revenue into the Highway Trust Fund. If Congress does the right thing and comes up with more revenue, this mechanism will allow those funds to be invested in transportation projects without additional action by Congress. This is a step in the right direction.
- ***Boosts Commerce and Economic Competitiveness:*** To be competitive in the world economy, we need to be able to get our goods and people from point A to point B in the quickest, most efficient way possible. This legislation will boost commerce and improve the movement of goods by supporting and funding critical freight projects. It provides \$6.3 billion to states for a freight formula program and an additional \$4.5 billion for nationally significant freight and highway projects under a competitive grant program. For the first time ever, the federal government will provide dedicated funding specifically for freight projects, including up to \$500 million in freight rail and intermodal projects.
- ***Creates American Jobs:*** This legislation increases American manufacturing jobs by strengthening Buy America requirements and raising the domestic content threshold of transit buses and rail cars from 60 percent to 70 percent. If we are investing American dollars, we should make sure those dollars are supporting American manufacturing and creating jobs here at home—not in China.

- **Promotes Safety:** It boosts funding for railway-highway grade crossings, motor carrier safety grants, and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration grants; ensures higher standards for transit safety; protects bus driver safety; and encourages states to provide mental health and substance abuse treatment to Driving Under the Influence offenders. The bill includes several critical new safety provisions to: create a new grant program to better protect cyclists and pedestrians; combat distracted and impaired driving; and improve education for new drivers.
- **Reduces Workforce Skills Gap:** Authorizes grants to help transit agencies overcome workforce skill gaps by recruiting and training transit workers who are from underrepresented populations, including minorities, women, individuals with disabilities, veterans, and low income populations. These grants also provide better frontline workforce training on safety, security, emergency preparedness, and communication during emergencies.
- **Promotes 21st Century Vehicles:** Requires USDOT to designate national electric vehicle charging and hydrogen, propane, and natural gas fueling corridors to identify the near and long-term investments needed to support the vehicles of the future.

Also Included in the FAST Act:

- Increases funding for the Tribal Transportation Program from \$450 million under current law to \$505 million by FY 2020. Includes a tribal self-governance program, which allows tribes who demonstrate transportation management capacity to receive all of their U.S. Department of Transportation funds under one agreement, reducing administrative burdens and increasing efficiency for tribes.
- Specifically makes National Scenic Areas eligible to receive Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects grant funding (bill provides \$4.5 billion over the life of the bill towards this program). This could benefit the Gorge National Scenic Area, as local governments pull together resources to make significant repairs to bridges straddling the Columbia River.
- Establishes two Oregon routes as High Priority Corridors on the National Highway System:
 - 99W Newberg-Dundee Bypass Route between Newberg, Oregon, and Dayton, Oregon.
 - I-205 in Oregon from its intersection with I-5 to the Columbia River.
- Includes a total of \$561,751 in funding for Marion and Clackamas Counties to support their ferry boat programs.
- Revises the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 to lift the ban on using tax-exempt bonds in combination with Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) loans. This will provide water districts in Oregon more flexibility in financing large municipal water projects.