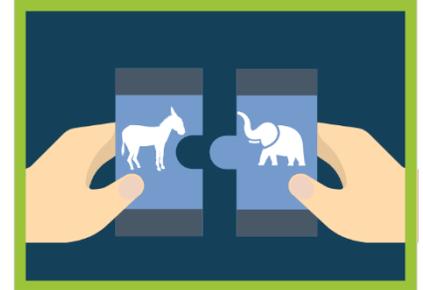


# Freight Railroads' Priorities for Surface Transportation Reauthorization in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress

The reauthorization of surface transportation programs presents a unique opportunity for Congress to provide a clear vision for our nation's recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Freight railroads remain committed to playing a fundamental role in that recovery and urge Congress to take two key actions.

**1. Pursue bipartisan solutions and infrastructure investments to accelerate our nation's economic recovery.** Commonsense, bipartisan solutions will improve the efficiency, safety, and resiliency of our infrastructure, address climate change, and create new, good-paying jobs. These proposals should:



- ✓ Increase funding to state and local governments for highway-rail grade crossing projects.
- ✓ Restore the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) to a true user-based fund through mechanisms such as an increase in the gas tax or the creation of a vehicle miles traveled fee or a weight-distance fee.
- ✓ Foster and facilitate the development, testing, and incorporation of new and emerging technologies — equally across all modes — to further improve safety and performance.
- ✓ Incorporate project permitting reforms that fast-track routine maintenance and replacement construction projects without disregarding important environmental or historic preservation reviews.
- ✓ Provide funding for Amtrak and state-supported passenger rail programs to maintain and replace current critical infrastructure.
- ✓ Provide funding for discretionary grant programs, such as INFRA, BUILD, CRISI, and Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair, that enable the public sector to partner with freight railroads to advance projects of mutual interest.
- ✓ Improve operational safety by including mechanical employees in drug and alcohol testing requirements.

**2. Avoid controversial policy riders that would hinder economic growth.** Freight railroads urge Congress to reject controversial policy riders that would undermine the industry's ability to fully support our nation's economic recovery. These riders should also not hinder freight railroads from making investments in their private networks to safely and efficiently meet freight transportation demand now and in the future. Such controversial proposals would:



- ✗ Distort competition within the freight transportation sector, including permitting longer or heavier commercial trucks to operate on our nation's highways and bridges.
- ✗ Mandate specific operating models, such as a minimum railroad crew size, and unnecessary personnel requirements that are not supported by safety data and would roll back efficiency gains and limit innovation and rail competitiveness.
- ✗ Limit the ability of environmentally-friendly railroads to meet our nation's current and future freight transportation demand through the imposition of arbitrary operational complexities and restrictions.