

Rocky Mountain and Great Plains Tribal Transportation Planners Meeting - Billings, MT February 13-15, 2008


ITA-NCAI JOINT TASK FORCE ON TRIBAL TRANSPORTATION: SAFETEA-LU REAUTHORIZATION PROPOSALS

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SAFETEA-LU REAUTHORIZATION

Congress will soon begin the reauthorization of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) to distribute hundreds of billions of transportation dollars to the U. S. Department of Transportation, Tribal, State and local transportation departments.

The Intertribal Transportation Association (ITA) and the National Congressional American Indians (NCAI) are again teaming up to develop nationwide support for a uniform package of Tribal transportation highway reauthorization legislative proposals.

ITA-NCAI Joint Task Force – Next Steps

- The Joint Task Force has asked Tribal leaders and others to provide comments on the draft Tribal Leadership White Paper by April 10, 2008.
- The Joint Task Force will then present legislative proposals to the NCAI and ITA leadership to develop a final package of legislative proposals for the SAFETEA-LU reauthorization.
- The Joint Task Force will then seek to gain broad support in Indian Country, meet with State, USDOT and Interior officials and lobby Congress to support our SAFETEA-LU reauthorization proposals.

Tribal Priority Number 1: Increase Funding for Tribal Transportation Programs to Address Chronic Unmet Needs and Keep Up with Inflation

- Increase IRR Program funding to \$500 million in FY 2010 with \$50 million annual step increases to \$750 million.
- Reset the Obligation Limitation for the IRR Program to 100% as occurred before TEA-21.

Tribal Priority Number 2: Create a New Tribal Transportation Safety Program and Funding Set Asides within the High Risk Rural Road Program

- Create a FHWA-Federal Lands Highway Tribal Safety Program funded at \$50 million annually to address structural and design flaws that contribute to death and injury on Tribal transportation systems;
- Create a NHTSA Tribal Safety Program funded at \$50 million annually to address behavioral issues that contribute to death and injury on Tribal transportation systems;
- Establish a 2% Tribal funding set aside from the High Risk Rural Roads Program.

Tribal Priority Number 3: Address Dangerous Tribal Road and Bridge Deferred Maintenance Backlog to Protect Public Safety and Taxpayer Investment in Tribal Transportation Facilities

- **URGENT ACTION REQUIRED:** The Interior Department's budget for FY 2009 proposes to cut the BIA Road Maintenance budget in half to only \$13 million for the entire country.
- If approved, this funding cut will have disastrous consequences for Indian Country and will lead to major lay offs of Tribal and BIA maintenance employees.
- With the economy slowing, now is the time to create jobs not eliminate them, and the President's request violates a Congressional mandate in SAFETEA-LU.

Tribal Priority Number 4: Extend the Indian Self-Determination Act to all USDOT Agencies and Make Existing USDOT Programs More Accessible to Tribal Governments

- Authorize the Secretary of Transportation to transfer State-administered transportation programs funds – with State consent – to Tribes through ISDEAA funding agreements;
- Encourage the USDOT to continue developing Tribally-appropriate funding pass-through agreements under existing law.

ITA-NCAI Joint Task Force—Ultimate Goal

Tribal governments and tribal organizations are well positioned to help shape the SAFETEA-LU reauthorization legislation in ways that greatly benefit the long-term interests of Indian nations, tribal members and all system users.

By working together, Indian tribes and their Native and Non-Native supporters can speak in a unified, powerful voice before Congress and the Administration to accomplish our goals.

Any Questions?