

Memorandum

From: Capitol Transportation Consulting and Pavluchuk & Associates

To: James Corless, Executive Director

Date: January 27, 2023

Subject: Federal Policy Monthly Report

SACOG in DC

James Corless attended the annual National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) conference in Washington, DC. As part of the conference, he heard from many federal agencies, including the Department of Transportation, Department of Energy, EPA, and HUD on their implementation of various grant programs and new policies. Separately, he also met with the Joint Office of Energy and Transportation at the Department of Energy, Senate Appropriations Committee staff, House Transportation Committee staff, Rep. Matsui's office, and Rep. Kiley's office to discuss various SACOG priorities like Green Means Go and to meet with new staff from the delegation.

Appropriations Update

In December, Congress passed its annual appropriations funding bill, including transportation funding that supports important programs and grants at the Department of Transportation (DOT). Some of the key programs included \$800M for RAISE grants, \$90M for transit buses, \$50M for the conversion to low and no emission buses, \$100M for large rail grants, \$535M for smaller rail grants, and \$1.1B for Amtrak's national network. The bill also included billions of dollars in congressionally directed spending (also known as earmarks), including projects in the Sacramento region like \$4.3M for the City of Sacramento's Zero Emission Vehicle fleet infrastructure and \$3.6M for the Sacramento Regional Transit District.

The bill also included new housing provisions that encourage a more regional approach. A new \$85M housing grant program, entitled "Yes, in my back yard" (YIMBY), which rewards local and regional jurisdictions that have made progress in improving inclusionary zoning practices, land use policies, and housing infrastructure that will ultimately increase the supply of affordable housing. The bill also makes Metropolitan Planning Organizations and other regional councils of governments eligible applicants. The bill also encourages the Department to actively seek opportunities for these entities to serve as lead applicants and grantees to promote and expand local, state, and regional collaboration.

New Congressional Leadership for Transportation

With the new Congress, there are new leaders of the various transportation committees. New leaders of some of the key transportation Committees are italicized in the chart below:

	Chair	Ranking Member
House Transportation & Infrastructure	<i>Sam Graves (R-MO)</i>	<i>Rick Larsen (D-WA)</i>
Senate Commerce	Maria Cantwell (D-WA)	<i>Ted Cruz (R-TX)</i>
Senate Appropriations	<i>Patty Murray (D-WA)</i>	<i>Susan Collins (R-ME)</i>
Senate Banking Committee	Sherrod Brown (D-OH)	<i>Rick Scott (R-SC)</i>

Joint Blueprint for Transportation Decarbonization

This week the Biden Administration released a [joint blueprint for transportation decarbonization](#) from the Department of Transportation, the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Housing and Urban Affairs. The Blueprint is meant to be a whole of government approach to transform the transportation sector, including coordinating actions and working effectively across departments and levels of government. The report identifies that transportation emissions stem from transportation system design and land use, vehicle efficiency and high-greenhouse gas fuels. It highlights that the government will need to increase convenience for people to access key destinations more easily and efficiently through better land use, expand transportation options like biking and walking, and transition to clean fuel options. The report raises similar issues and solutions to those identified by SACOG in the Green Means Go initiative.

Grant Update

The Department of Transportation published an [updated estimate](#) for when bipartisan infrastructure law grant programs will open. While these timelines are not exact, they can help agencies and communities to better prepare for when funding will be available and when applications will likely be due.

The Department of Transportation announced [\\$2 billion in large bridge grants](#) from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This is the first round of large bridge grants, there will be four additional rounds in the coming years. According to DOT, this first round of grants will fund construction for four projects, which connect communities in five states and are vital to the everyday lives of working people and freight travel that supports our national economy. The grants include \$400 million for the Golden Gate Bridge in California.

The Federal Transit Administration opened the [grant application period](#) for low and no emission buses, as well as bus and bus facility grants. There is more than \$1.7 billion available this year for projects and applications are due April 13th. Last year, FTA awarded \$1.6 billion to 150 projects across the country. This is an important program to the Department to assist state and communities with the transition to low and zero emission vehicles.