



» Federal Funding Uncertainty and Underinvestment in Infrastructure

As 2015 wound down, Congress gave states something they had asked for since 2009—long-term legislation to authorize and fund federal transportation programs. But while the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act, or the FAST Act, will give states the greater certainty about federal transportation funding levels they haven’t had, which may give them greater confidence to authorize investment in long-term transportation projects, it mostly maintains a status quo many say has been inadequate for many years. With no significant increases in funding, no new revenues identified to sustain the Highway Trust Fund long term and little in the way of transformational policy changes, the bill appears likely to challenge states anew to address their backlogs of deferred maintenance and delayed projects and to meet future needs.

» States Explore Transportation Revenue Options

Eight states—Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Michigan, Nebraska, South Dakota, Utah and Washington—raised their gas taxes in 2015. Two other states—Kentucky and North Carolina—made adjustments to their gas tax mechanisms to make revenues more reliable. Delaware meanwhile enacted legislation to raise several vehicle and license fees in order to fund road repair and maintenance. And states such as Maine and Texas approved ballot measures that will result in more money going to transportation. In 2013, six states produced major transportation revenue packages. A large number of states could join the club in 2016, particularly if states that have come close to passing revenue-raising legislation or examined revenue options in recent years move forward.

» Cloudy Future for Tolling and Public-Private Partnerships

It has been a transitional couple of years for public-private partnerships—also known as P3s—and tolling. Despite the successful closing of P3 deals on key projects in a handful of states, the flow of such deals remains erratic in the U.S. due to a variety of factors including: political turnover in governorships, a continuing P3 knowledge gap among state officials, the lack of uniformity among state P3 laws, the ballooning costs of some projects, and the increasing complexity of P3 projects and processes. And while states such as Missouri, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Wisconsin point to tolling as a possible solution to their transportation funding needs, anti-toll forces in Texas, North Carolina and elsewhere have made their voices heard and prompted a reassessment of tolling on some projects.

» Impacts of Technology and Trends on Planning and Policy

From the current insurance and regulatory concerns presented by rideshare companies like Uber and Lyft to the even more complex issues presented by the promise of driverless cars that communicate directly with the transportation infrastructure, state policymakers and planners will have their work cut out for them as they seek to stay one step ahead of technology, population growth, demographic shifts, increasing freight volumes, generational preferences and other factors that are reshaping the transportation landscape.

» Fulfilling Transit’s Potential Despite Challenges

Public transit ridership was at an all-time high in 2014 with 10.8 billion trips taken in the U.S. Recognizing the value put on transportation choice by millennials and businesses alike, even car-centric states and cities are making investments in light rail, bus rapid transit, bike lanes and other upgrades and reaping the benefits of development around transit hubs that are building new communities and revitalizing old ones. But in some places, aging, deficient and deteriorating transit systems threaten to turn off riders and challenge the resources of policymakers to maintain a high level of service while keeping transit’s winning streak alive.

For more information on these topics and for additional resources on transportation policy, see » www.csg.org/top5in2016.



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Before joining the CSG staff in 2006, Slone spent 10 years as a producer for C-SPAN in Washington, D.C., and five years as a producer/reporter for Kentucky Educational Television, where he covered the Kentucky General Assembly. Slone earned a bachelor's degree in television production from Emerson College and a master's degree in journalism from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism.

Get Involved

CSG provides state leaders a variety of regional and national opportunities to actively engage on issues of importance to their jurisdictions and constituents. CSG's regional and national committees and task forces are designed to encourage multi-state problem solving, the sharing of best practices, and networking among state officials and between the public and private sectors.

CSG's Transportation & Infrastructure Public Policy Committee is co-chaired this year by Sen. Mike Vehle of South Dakota and Rep. Diane Lanpher of Vermont. The committee focuses on such issues as America's infrastructure needs and federal and state transportation funding.

The committee will hold its next meeting at the 2016 CSG National Conference, Dec. 8-11 in Colonial Williamsburg, Va. CSG also hosts invitation-only transportation policy academies for regionally selected state legislators serving on transportation committees at various times during the year.

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