

**Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Association of Bay Area Governments
Joint MTC ABAG Legislation Committee**

January 12, 2024

Agenda Item 2b

Washington D.C. Legislative Update

Subject:

December 2023 Report from Washington, D.C. advocate.

Issues:

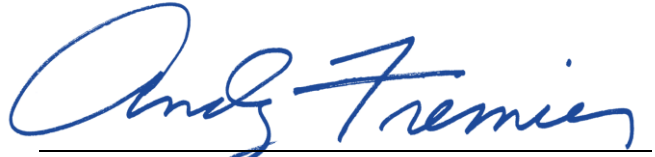
None identified.

Recommendations:

Information

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Summit Strategies Team Report – December 2023



Andrew B. Fremier



**SUMMIT
STRATEGIES**

440 1st Street, NW, Suite 440
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 638-3307 main
(202) 595-9192 fax
www.summitstrategies.us

Summit Strategies Team Report – December 2023

From: Summit Strategies Team

To: Andrew B. Fremier, Executive Director

Date: January 4, 2024

Subject: December Federal Policy Monthly Report

- **Appropriations Process Stalls**
 - **Supporting MTC Priorities in Congress**
 - **National Transportation News Roundup**
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Below is a status update on issues of interest to MTC and the actions that we have taken to date.

Appropriations Process Stalls

The U.S. House of Representatives and Senate have stalled in passing annual appropriations bills. During an internal call, Representative Garret Graves (R-LA) expressed skepticism that the House will be able to move individual spending bills before the upcoming appropriations deadlines, instead suggesting that the House might move forward with a “minibus” which combines a few of the more controversial spending bills. In the Senate, there has been no movement on any spending bills since passage of the three-bill minibus, which included the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies; Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration; and Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies appropriations bills.

With passage of the spending bills kicked to 2024, Congress focused on other important measures, including the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and supplemental funding for Ukraine, Israel, Taiwan, and the southern border. On Wednesday, December 6th, House and Senate negotiators filed a compromise version of the NDAA that authorizes a national defense

budget of \$886 billion, which passed. Meanwhile, Senate Republicans blocked Biden’s foreign aid package, citing a lack of immigration and asylum reform in the bill. It is unclear how negotiations on this measure will move forward, if at all. In the House, Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) has stated that there will be no supplemental funding package unless it includes H.R. 2 – Secure the Border Act of 2023, which includes conservative changes to border policies and the asylum process and is unlikely to pass in the Democrat-controlled Senate.

Supporting MTC Priorities in Congress

This month, the DC Team advocated for several of MTC’s current and future grant applications. Efforts included creating delegation support letters and coordinating member calls to the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). In support of future grant applications, the DC Team gathered intel and held discussions with DOT and HUD on the status of upcoming notices of funding opportunities (NOFO). With DOT and HUD, the DC Team also discussed the status of current MTC grant applications.

The DC Team also held discussions with the California delegation and DOT on the bridge grant caps under the Bridge Investment Program (BIP), including identifying next steps to help provide additional funding for MTC bridge projects.

National Transportation News Roundup (links to articles)

- [Where public transit is recovering – and where it’s not \(Axios\)](#)
- [Assaults on transit workers tripled nationwide; income and distrust may be why \(East Bay Times\)](#)
- [SamTrans to pilot same-day paratransit service for 12 months \(Mass Transit\)](#)
- [News Wire Year in Review: The year in transit \(Trains\)](#)
- [USDOT Issues ‘Safe Streets and Roads for All’ Grants \(AASHTO\)](#)