

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

March 8, 2024

Agenda Item 4a

Washington DC Legislative Update

Subject:

February 2024 Report from Washington, DC advocate.

Issues:

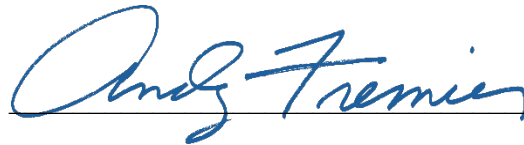
None identified.

Recommendations:

Information

Attachments:

- Attachment A: Summit Strategies Team Report – February 2024



Andrew B. Fremier



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Summit Strategies Team Report – February 2024

From: Summit Strategies Team

To: Andrew B. Fremier, Executive Director

Date: March 6, 2024

Subject: February Federal Policy Monthly Report

- **FTA Administrator Fernandez Retires**
 - **Biden Pumping Breaks on Emissions Standards**
 - **Spending Bills Released**
 - **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.

FTA Administrator Fernandez Retires

On February 7, 2024, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced that Administrator Nuria Fernandez will retire effective February 24, 2024. Fernandez has served as the head of the FTA for nearly three years. During her time with the agency, Administrator Fernandez shepherded billions of dollars in funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to communities nationwide. Upon her retirement, FTA Deputy Administrator Veronica Vanterpool, with whom MTC commissioners and staff have met several times, will serve as Acting Administrator. Administrator Fernandez's retirement marks the latest departure of an Administrator from the US Department of Transportation. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration are all also without Senate-confirmed leaders.

Biden Pumping Breaks on Emissions Standards

The Biden Administration is planning to delay a rulemaking that limits tailpipe emissions. Under the rule, new emissions standards would apply to light-, medium-, and heavy-duty vehicles for model year 2027 and beyond. The regulation was designed to ensure that two-thirds of new passenger cars and one-quarter of new heavy trucks sold in the United States are electric by 2032. While the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) cannot mandate that car manufacturers sell electric vehicles (EV), the emissions standards on car manufacturers would encourage them to increase EV sales.

The potential delay would still require auto manufacturers to meet new emissions standards, but they would be phased in more gradually through 2030, with a sharp rise after 2030. The delay would allow additional time for constructing more EV infrastructure and charging capacity to meet future requirements.

Spending Bills Released

On March 3, 2024, the House Appropriations Committee released the legislative text for six fiscal year (FY) 2024 appropriations bills, including Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies; Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies; Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies; Interior Environment, and Related Agencies; Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies; and Transportation and Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies. The six spending bills cost nearly \$460 billion, representing less than 30 percent of the discretionary spending Congress will try to approve for FY 2024. The legislation is expected to be voted on in the House of Representatives and later in the Senate. While it is expected to pass, some Republicans in the House of Representatives have criticized the lack of conservative policy riders in the bills and have vowed to oppose the legislation.

The 2024 Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) spending bill will provide more than \$106 billion in budgetary resources for the US Department of Transportation, an increase of \$15.5 billion from FY 2023. This is in addition to \$36.8 billion in discretionary spending from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). Of the \$106 billion, \$60.8 billion will go to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for formula programs, and \$2.2 billion will go to highway infrastructure programs and projects. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will receive \$16.6 billion, including \$13.9 billion for Transit Formula Funds, \$2.4 billion for Capital Investment Grants, and \$252 million for transit infrastructure grants and projects.

Supporting MTC Priorities in Congress

This month, the DC Team has worked to secure letters of support for MTC's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) discretionary grant application, coordinating with Senators Alex Padilla and Laphonza Butler and Representatives Nancy Pelosi and Barbara Lee. The DC Team is also communicating with the Department of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development about MTC's pending grant applications.

National Transportation News Roundup (links to articles)

[Five Transit Trends to Watch in 2024](https://www.masstransitmag.com/management/article/53095555/five-transit-trends-to-watch-in-2024)

(<https://www.masstransitmag.com/management/article/53095555/five-transit-trends-to-watch-in-2024>)

[Transit workers fight drugs on buses and trains](https://www.axios.com/local/portland/2024/02/13/oregon-drug-usage-transit-sb-1553)

(<https://www.axios.com/local/portland/2024/02/13/oregon-drug-usage-transit-sb-1553>)

- [MTA projects put on hold due to lawsuits against congestion pricing](https://www.masstransitmag.com/management/press-release/53097638/metropolitan-transportation-authority-ny-mta-mta-projects-put-on-hold-due-to-lawsuits-against-congestion-pricing)

(<https://www.masstransitmag.com/management/press-release/53097638/metropolitan-transportation-authority-ny-mta-mta-projects-put-on-hold-due-to-lawsuits-against-congestion-pricing>)

- [FTA Awards \\$631MM for Rail Vehicle Replacement \(Railway Age\)](https://www.railwayage.com/regulatory/fta-awards-631mm-for-rail-vehicle-replacement/)

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