

**WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGHWAY AND
TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS**

POLICY RESOLUTION 02-09

**TITLE: EXPRESSING CONCERN ABOUT PROVISIONS CONTAINED IN
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2009**

WHEREAS, the Western Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (WASHTO) represents the departments of transportation of eighteen western states; and

WHEREAS, WASHTO supports provisions in the proposed Surface Transportation Authorization Act of 2009 that seek to significantly increase federal investment in our nation's multimodal transportation systems; recognizes the importance of preserving our existing transportation system and bringing it up to a state of good repair along with some provisions aimed at streamlining the project delivery process; and

WHEREAS, the western United States is growing and will continue to grow. The populations of the eighteen WASHTO states are projected to increase by 46 percent between the year 2000 and 2030. By comparison, the population in the remaining states will increase by 21 percent; and

WHEREAS, as the West keeps growing, all modes of transportation will continue to play an important role in meeting current and future transportation needs, however, highways will continue to represent the backbone of transportation for both people and freight throughout the West and across the United States; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Surface Transportation Authorization Act of 2009 appears to favor transit and non-motorized modes of transportation at the expense of highway investment which disadvantages rapidly-growing western states and less populated areas of the West which will continue to rely on highways to support economic growth and development; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Surface Transportation Authorization Act of 2009 devotes a larger share of total transportation dollars to discretionary funding programs for projects to be selected by the United States Department of Transportation which could restrict the ability of many states, particularly rural states, from participating in these programs. While these investments may advantage large urban areas, including large urban centers in the West, these should not disadvantage rural and non-urban areas of the West from making meaningful improvements to transportation systems that are essential in providing system connectivity across the country; and

WHEREAS, based on decades of success in the development of the nation's surface transportation system, due in large part to the expertise that states have developed in transportation planning and project delivery, implementation of a federally assisted and state administered program must continue to be respected and utilized in the federal

surface transportation program such that the role and authority of states in the delivery of highway and surface transportation programs is enhanced, not diminished, compared to present law; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Surface Transportation Authorization Act of 2009 decreases state flexibility to effectively use federal funds including, but not limited to, eliminating ability of states to transfer funds between highway program elements; not clearly permitting significant funds to be used to reconstruct, restore and resurface highways and, for most highway categories, restrict use of funds to add capacity when needed; subjecting a larger portion of Surface Transportation Program funds to geographic restrictions; imposing additional restrictions on eligible uses of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program funds; and

WHEREAS, WASHTO supports the position of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) for a state-driven performance management process, rather than top-down performance management processes contained in the proposed Surface Transportation Authorization Act of 2009;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, WASHTO expresses strong concerns about our ability to meet critical highway needs required for safety, and moving people and freight, under the proposed Surface Transportation Authorization Act of 2009;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in addition to significantly increasing federal transportation funding for all states and for all transportation modes, WASHTO supports proportionate increases in highway and transit funding that recognizes the needs in both modes in order to better meet both rural and urban transportation needs;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that WASHTO supports increasing, not decreasing, the proportion of highway and transportation funds to be distributed by formula to the states and WASHTO agrees with AASHTO that not less than 90 percent of highway program funds must be distributed by formulas to the states;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that WASHTO supports retaining and increasing flexibility for states to find solutions, and to make modal, and project and program funding decisions that best meet the unique needs of each state and area of the West.

It is further resolved that copies of this resolution be sent to appropriate committees of the United States Congress, the U.S. Department of Transportation, and the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.



Paula J. Hammond
WASHTO President

8/13/09