



RURAL TRANSPORTATION ADVOCACY COUNCIL 2009 FEDERAL AGENDA

The Rural Transportation Advocacy Council (RTAC) of Arizona consists of the local and regional governments outside of the Phoenix and Tucson metropolitan areas. The goal of the organization is to promote the development of transportation infrastructure consistent with the needs of Arizona's emerging population and economic growth. At the federal level, Arizona continues to receive back less than it sends to Washington in gas tax revenue despite having one of the fastest growing populations, a considerable land mass and extremely high levels of interstate and international travel particularly from the sea ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles and the international ports of entry. For these reasons, a central theme to the RTAC federal agenda is to expand the level of transportation revenue directed to Arizona while maintaining existing resources. The following are the RTAC federal priorities for 2009:

- ***Maintain the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund.*** While the Fund has lost much of its purchasing power and impact concerning the financing of the Nation's transportation infrastructure, it still amounts to over 40% of the total revenue generated for that purpose. While efforts to revamp transportation financing policies need to continue, in the interim, the Federal Highway Trust Fund must remain solvent with no further erosion of the federal investment in our infrastructure.
- ***Federal Reimbursement for the Hoover Dam Bypass Bridge.*** The States of Arizona and Nevada loaned money to the federal government for the construction of the bridge. While Nevada has been fully reimbursed, as of February, 2008, Arizona is still owed \$19 Million. Interest continues to accrue on the loan amount. If the debt service payment must rely on state formula funds, less revenue will be available for the State Highway Construction Program.
- ***Federal Appropriation for a bridge between Bullhead City, Arizona and Laughlin, Nevada.*** As Nevada has already received a \$20 Million authorization for this interstate project, a similar appropriation for Arizona's portion of the costs above the formula funding already allocated to Arizona is being sought in addition to the continued authorization of the Nevada portion if not funded prior to the expiration of the current authorization.
- ***Arizona Department of Transportation Rural Transit Program.*** ADOT has submitted a FTA 5309 application to develop a statewide rural transit program. As smaller communities quite often do not have the resources to start their own transit programs or use local funding as leverage for state and federal funding, the development of such a program would greatly enhance the ability of smaller communities to provide transit services to the general public, elderly and persons with disabilities.
- ***Rail Infrastructure Development.*** Freight volumes will continue to rise substantially placing increased pressure on rail lines and highways. Expanding freight and passenger rail capacity is vital to addressing future needs provided such expansion is compatible with other modes of transportation and that the railroad industry is financially committed to eliminating high volume at-grade crossings.
- ***International Land Ports of Entry.*** Inadequate infrastructure at the ports of entry and adjacent roads impede economic activity and the high levels of international traffic and congestion greatly impact local and state transportation systems. RTAC supports the efforts of the Governor's CANAMEX Coalition and others to secure additional federal funding to develop quality transportation infrastructure along the international border.

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