



Top Stories

8/22/16 – The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) [released](#) new data showing that total vehicle miles travelled across the United States reached 1.58 trillion miles in the first six months of 2016, an all-time high. Additionally, total vehicle miles travelled in June 2016, rose 2.9 percent compared to June 2015.

8/16/16 – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in combination with the California Air Resources Board (CARB) [finalized](#) fuel economy and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) standards for heavy-duty trucks for model years

2019-2027. These final Phase 2 rules build upon the fuel efficiency and GHG standards already in place for model years 2014-2018. Currently, these vehicles account for about 20 percent of GHG emissions and oil use in the U.S. transportation sector. EPA, NHTSA and CARB anticipate the new standards will lower CO2 emissions by 1.1 billion metric tons—10 percent greater than the emissions reductions included in EPA's [draft proposal](#) in 2015.

7/28/16 – The Surface Transportation Board (STB) issued two final rules regarding the relationship between Amtrak and freight railroads. In a reversal of previous proposals, the STB [ruled](#) that Amtrak's "on-time" performance is based on all stops

on a given route, rather than arrival at final stop. Additionally, it [reversed](#) its previous proposal that would have removed the current preference for Amtrak when operating on tracks owned by freight railroads.

7/28/16 – U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Anthony Foxx [announced](#) \$500 million in funding for 2016 Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grants. The awards will fund 40 projects in 32 states.

In total, DOT received \$9.3 billion in grant application requests. A full list of projects receiving funds can be found [here](#).

From the 114th Congress

8/18/16 – In response to the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) [Proposed Rule on National Performance Management Measures](#) that would

include greenhouse gas emissions as a performance measure, Senators [Pat Roberts](#) (R-Kan) and [Barbara Boxer](#) (D-Calif), Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, respectively, wrote letters opposing and supporting FHWA.

7/14/16 – As part of the [FAA Extension, Safety, and Security Act of 2016](#), a 17-month extension of FAA authority, Congress included provisions regarding usage of unmanned aerial systems (drones) around critical infrastructure and in firefighting operations. For additional information see NCSL's [Info Alert](#) on passage by Congress and NCSL's report on [Drones and Critical Infrastructure](#).



From the Administration

8/16/16 – The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) [awarded](#) \$25 million in grants to help spur the implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC). PTC is a technology system that is designed to prevent train collisions, excessive speed and work zone incursions. Railroads are currently required to achieve full implementation by the end of 2018.

8/11/16 – The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) [released](#) its final rule regarding oversight of U.S. transit system safety. The proposal includes the potential for FTA to withhold federal funds if serious violations are not resolved.

8/10/16 – The Pipeline and Hazard Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) released a final rule that spells out the schedule for replacing rail tank cars used to transport unrefined petroleum products, such as crude oil and ethanol. The rule is in response to requirements established in the [FAST Act](#), a five-year reauthorization of federal transportation programs. Additionally, in July, PHMSA [proposed](#) a rule that would require information sharing from railroads with state emergency responders for any trains carrying 35 or more loaded tank cars of crude, or about 1 million gallons of oil. Any railroad stringing 20 or more tank cars in a row would also have to comply with the new regulations.

7/25/16 – EPA [finalized](#) a determination under the Clean Air Act (CAA) that greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from aircraft engines contribute to pollution that “endangers Americans’ health and environment.”

7/22/16 - FHWA [issued a request for nominations](#) from state and local officials to assist in the designation of national electric vehicle charging, hydrogen, propane, and natural gas fueling corridors, based on a requirement included in the FAST Act.

7/20/16 – DOT [formally](#) established the Build America Bureau, which will combine a number of individual programs and functions inside DOT focused on private sector investment in

transportation including TIFIA, BATIC and Private Activity Bonds.

7/18/16 – The administration is in the midst of its [midterm review](#) regarding its 2012 Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFÉ) standards for light duty vehicles (passenger automobiles) that would regulate fuel economy for model years 2022-2025. A [draft analysis](#) from EPA, NHTSA and CARB states that manufacturers are on track to comply with the current standards, although vehicle manufacturers have expressed concern in light of low gasoline prices and current purchasing trends among consumers. A final decision is expected in 2018.

7/6/16 – DOT [notified](#) the appropriate congressional committees regarding \$759 million in grant awards, as part of the new Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects (FASTLANE) program. The program was created by the [2015 FAST Act](#) and is intended to provide financial assistance to nationally and regionally significant freight and highway projects. A list of the projects can be found [here](#).

Other News

8/10/16 – The Center for American Progress released a [report](#) on public private partnerships, highlighting their concern that "public-private partnerships have been fundamentally miscast as a solution to a growing government funding deficit."

8/5/16 – The Energy Information Administration [reported](#) that the U.S. transportation sector has produced more carbon emissions than any other sector of the economy over the last 12 months, including the electric power sector.

NCSL Resources

Visit the [Agenda and Resources page](#) to see the many presentations, speaker bios and streamed sessions available from the 2016 Legislative Summit, and also find [presentations and other material](#) from past NCSL meetings.