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NACo responds to Congress’ temporary transportation fix, urges long-term action


NACo President Riki Hokama, council member, Maui County, Hawaii, said, “We understand the need for an immediate fix, but counties urge Congress to provide long-term certainty.”

“The time for short-term patches is over. Stopgap measures hinder major transportation investments and jeopardize jobs,” he continued. “There is a significant need for a long-term reinvestment in America.”

NACo Transportation Committee Chair Peter McLaughlin, commissioner, Hennepin County, Minn., said, “Temporary fixes are not enough. Counties are doing everything we can, and we urge our partners on the Hill to stop kicking the can down the road.”

“We hope Congress will use this extension time to demonstrate visionary leadership and secure long-term certainty for our nation’s transportation system. The stakes are too high to do otherwise,” McLaughlin said.

Counties own and maintain the greatest share of the nation’s road miles, or 45 percent (compared to the 32 percent of public roads owned by cities and townships; 19 percent by states; and 3 percent by the federal government) and more than 230,000 bridges, or 39 percent. Counties are also stewards of more than a third of the nation’s transit systems and airports that connect residents, communities and businesses.

Hokama recently announced his presidential initiative to strengthen counties’ ability to deliver transportation and infrastructure services to their communities. His Transportation and Infrastructure Initiative will address the county role in promoting investments that support economic competitiveness, improve passenger travel, foster creative partnerships, ensure safety and enhance community quality of life.
“Counties are the leaders on a wide range of issues, and I am working to make sure that we are well-prepared and well-represented at the federal level,” said Hokama. “Transportation and infrastructure are key components to strengthening the economy, moving our food efficiently and maintaining our national defense.”

Counties play an essential role in transportation and infrastructure networks. Investing over $100 billion each year in roads, bridges, transit, water systems and other public facilities, counties facilitate everything from Americans’ daily commutes to the shipping of goods around the globe.

“Our top priorities include a six-year reauthorization of MAP-21 and securing a long-term solution for the Highway Trust Fund,” said Hokama. “Additionally, my Presidential Initiative addresses transportation and infrastructure issues such as airports, technology and hospitals.”

For more information on NACo’s legislative transportation priorities, visit http://www.naco.org/legislation/policies/Pages/Transportation.aspx.

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The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo assists America’s 3,069 counties in pursuing excellence in public service to produce healthy, vibrant, safe and resilient counties. NACo promotes sound public policies, fosters county solutions and innovation, promotes intergovernmental and public-private collaboration and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. More information at: www.naco.org.