



WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Division of Highways

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Byrd E. White, III
Secretary of Transportation/
Commissioner of Highways

April 20, 2020

Jimmy Wriston, P. E.
Deputy Secretary/
Deputy Commissioner

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senate
48 Donley Street, Suite 504
Morgantown, West Virginia 26501

Dear Senator Capito: *Shelley*

We are writing to follow up on the request made by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) on April 6, 2020, to provide \$49.95 billion as an immediate revenue backstop for state DOTs in Phase 4 of COVID-19 response.

This crucial action will prevent major disruptions in state DOTs' collective ability to operate and maintain our Nation's transportation system during this unprecedented emergency. And it will also prevent cancellations and delays of projects as well as potential job losses both in the state DOT workforce and the private sector around the country.

Compared to \$111 billion in state transportation revenues in FY 2019 according to the National Association of State Budget Officers (State Expenditure Report PDF Page 123), preliminary projections from AASHTO show an estimated 30 percent decline on average for the next 18 months. In addition, most recent data from INRIX shows that personal travel dropped 47 percent nationally through the week ending April 3, 2020, and may worsen in the coming weeks.

AASHTO's \$49.95 billion request is composed of 16.7 billion for the remainder of FY 2020 based on an estimated 30 percent state revenue cut prorated over six months and \$33.3 billion for all of FY 2021 based on an estimated 30 percent state revenue cut for a full year.

Given the urgent nature of states' needs in the coming weeks and months, we request these backstop funds to be essentially treated as state revenues that would otherwise have been collected for a wide range of state DOT activities without the COVID-19 pandemic. This broad funding eligibility would recognize the fact that state transportation revenues are used for any and all transportation activities undertaken by state DOTs.

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For West Virginia, we are currently estimating a 30 percent decline in transportation revenues in the coming several months. Data from our permanent traffic counters reflect a 40 percent decrease in overall traffic and a 20-30 percent decrease in truck traffic during the weekdays.

Although our potential revenue drops have not immediately impacted our fiscal ability to perform work and accept expenditures, a sustained financial environment such as this could create future problems. Should this continue, this federal assistance would be greatly needed in order for us to be able to continue these critical functions:

- Sustaining expenditures on existing State-Funded capital improvement projects as well as being able to provide the State match on all Federal-Aid projects
- Continued expenditures in our Annual Plan Maintenance Budgets to perform critical core maintenance activities to sustain our roadway infrastructure
- Keeping citizens, employees, and contractors in the Great State of West Virginia working and providing a living for them and their families
- Minimizing project impact in terms of delays and cancellations due to fiscal responsibility

Thank you for your bold leadership during this unprecedented crisis and for your consideration of our request for the next COVID-19-related legislation.

Sincerely,



Byrd E. White, III
Secretary of Transportation
Commissioner of Highways

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