

Talking Points for Jill Hochman

Transportation Border Working Group Meeting Vancouver, BC December 4, 2002

FHWA Border and TEA-21 Update

- The Department is still working on reauthorization issues. Current TEA-21 authorization expires September 30, 2003.
- When will there be a DOT proposal? We are hoping that a DOT proposal for reauthorization will be announced with the FY 03 budget.
- The Department is still operating under a Continuing Resolution in the absence of a FY03 budget. Basically, we have been given funding to exist and pay salaries, with limited ability to travel and conduct other activities such as research projects. We are operating under the current CR until January 11, 2003. The 107th Congress has adjourned, with the 108th Congress being sworn in on January 7, 2003. We predict that they will pass another CR that will take us through March.
- Reauthorization of TEA-21 will include movement of goods and people enhancements; however, funding will not be as widespread as previous authorizations.
- Among key issues to consider in reauthorization include guiding principles, how surface transportation programs (highways and transit) will change and in what areas, DOT reauthorization priorities such as will we continue to provide flexibility to the states to implement a Federal-aid program that's appropriate for the individual state? Will we look at changing funding and funding flexibility to address surface transportation issues? How will border concerns be addressed and funded? How will bi-national planning be dealt with?

- Will statewide and metropolitan planning program remain relatively unchanged or be completely re-done? How will bi-national planning be addressed and how we will change (or not) the long-range plan and the financial element of the planning/programming process?
- Freight – Freight movement projects will likely receive greater attention under reauthorization as an issue to be addressed in the planning process.

Borders and Corridors Program

- TEA-21 recognized the importance of borders and corridors. Reauthorization is looking to continue this focus.
- The Northern Border received about \$62 million of the \$846 million in Corridors and Borders funding awarded to date (FY 1999 – FY2002), or only about 7% of the total awards under the program.
- Separating the Borders and Corridors programs into two programs is still part of our discussions at DOT. The new Administration wants to separate the programs with emphasis on planning, including security enhancements.
- Another issue to examine is whether Corridor and Border funds can be used to support an improvement in Canada or Mexico that benefits the US. The answer is yes - - to a limited extent. If, for example, if an improvement requires installation of a system of sensing and communication devices; and, for that system to function, some of the devices needed to be physically located in Canada or Mexico in the immediate vicinity of the border, then that is acceptable. But, costs associated with physical improvements not in the immediate vicinity of the border are generally not eligible unless they are incidental compared to the overall project costs.
- DOT has created a web page to receive comments on proposed reauthorization legislation: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/reauthorization/>