

Kerry-Lieberman American Power Act Transportation Sections (1711, 1712, 1721)

The Kerry-Lieberman "American Power Act" released today is a major endorsement of clean transportation as a critical strategy for energy independence and climate protection.

The transportation language in the bill (Sections 1711 and 1712) is identical to Sections 112 and 113 of the Kerry-Boxer climate bill that passed out of the Senate Environment Committee last November. This language was based off of the Specter-Carper CLEAN-TEA legislation (S 575) introduced last year.

POLICY

The bill includes the following policy language to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and oil consumption from the transportation sector:

- A national goal for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector
- Tools and other resources for states and regions to measure current and projected future GHG emissions from transportation plans and projects
- Directs states and large MPOs (over 200,000) to GHG reduction targets and strategies to achieve those targets as part of state and metropolitan long range transportation plans

FUNDING

An average of 7.3% of the allocations (about \$6 billion a year) in funding for states and regions to help them plan for a low-carbon future and build green transportation projects. This funding is split among:

- 1/3 toward the USDOT TIGER program, a popular competitive grant program started in the stimulus bill,
- 1/3 toward a new program to fund state and local projects that reduce oil consumption and greenhouse gas emissions; and
- 1/3 for the Highway Trust Fund

Planning & Competitive Grant Program (Section 1712)

- Maximum of 10% of funds in this section for MPOs to develop the greenhouse gas reduction plans, distributed by formula based on population.
- DOT in consultation with EPA would develop criteria for distributing the remaining funds as grants to states and MPOs for projects and programs within transportation greenhouse gas reduction plans. The federal share is 80%. The formula takes into account:
 - Quantity of GHG reductions estimated from plan
 - Cost-effectiveness of GHG reductions over the life of the plan
 - Progress toward achieving reductions
 - Reductions previously achieved
 - Plans that address mobility needs of people without cars, with low incomes, minorities, the elderly, disabled, etc
 - Other factors such as innovative approaches, economic development, and other benefits.
- States and MPOs can sub-grant funds to local governments, air quality agencies, zoning commissions, transit agencies and other non-eligible public entities.

TIGER (page 505)

The TIGER program is a multi-modal discretionary grant program created in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The program included sustainability as a criteria. The first round of funding was released earlier this year.

Highway Trust Fund (Section 1721)

The language under the Highway Trust Fund section is fairly vague. We interpret it to mean the HTF \$ will go toward projects that are in the state and MPO plans.

“Emission allowances allocated pursuant to section 781(f) to the Highway Trust Fund shall be used to promote the safety, effectiveness, and efficiency of transportation in the United States through measures that are consistent with transportation efficiency planning under section 803 and other relevant provisions of law.”

MESSAGE

These policies are a win-win for the country on several levels:

- It provides consumers with safe, clean and affordable options for public transportation, walking and bicycling, as well as better-managed, less congested highways;
- It provides states and local communities some of the resources needed to plan for and provide those options;
- It is a down-payment on an overdue plan to reduce our over-reliance on oil.

We hope you can join us in congratulating Senators Kerry and Lieberman for including robust policy and funding for transportation in their climate legislation!