Statement by CAGTC Executive Director Elaine Nessle on the White House’s “Legislative Outline for Rebuilding Infrastructure in America”

WASHINGTON, DC (February 13, 2018) – “We appreciate the President’s recognition of the importance of improving our nation’s transportation infrastructure. We must strengthen our national freight transportation network, particularly if the recently-enacted tax reform law spurs significant economic growth as projected by proponents. Freight network improvements cannot be delivered piecemeal by states and localities – over 77 percent of the nation’s freight moves between states, requiring a coordinated goods movement strategy and robust funding from the Federal government. In addition, the economic benefits of significant freight movement accrue nationally, while the negative impacts – such as traffic congestion, safety impacts and unreliable travel times – are felt locally. The Commerce Clause of our Constitution authorizes the Federal government to support interstate commerce, accomplished through significant investments to support the movement of goods. We call for a minimum annual Federal investment for freight infrastructure of $2 billion above current levels. However, we are concerned that the White House proposal does not identify investment amounts specific for freight projects and appears to treat all infrastructure alike, which could result in underinvestment in regionally and nationally significant freight infrastructure improvements necessary to sustain American economic growth.

Moreover, now is not the time to eliminate programs that support goods movement infrastructure, as was suggested in the President’s FY19 budget request. Therefore we call on Congress and the Administration to maintain current transportation programs, especially the bipartisan Transportation Investments Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program. An invaluable tool for goods movement infrastructure, over a total of eight rounds, 42 percent of total TIGER funding has been awarded to projects with a strong freight component, making awards across all 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.

Issuance of the President’s infrastructure proposal creates an opportunity to examine ways in which Federal infrastructure programming and project delivery can be enhanced and improved. We look forward to working with Congress and the Administration in the coming months to develop an infrastructure package that will deliver economic returns for years to come.”

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About the Coalition
The Coalition for America’s Gateways and Trade Corridors (CAGTC) is a diverse coalition of more than 60 public and private organizations dedicated to increasing federal investment in America’s intermodal freight infrastructure. In contrast to single mode interests, CAGTC’s main mission is to promote a seamless goods movement transportation system across all modes to enhance capacity and economic growth. For more information on the Coalition for America’s Gateways and Trade Corridors, please visit www.tradecorridors.org.