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Landmark Freight Provisions Signed Into Law
CAGTC Applauds FAST Act for Unprecedented $10.8 Billion Freight Investment Program

WASHINGTON, DC (December 4, 2015) – Today, President Obama signed H.R. 22, the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, a $281 billion, five-year surface transportation bill with, for the first time, dedicated freight infrastructure funding. Over its five-year duration, this landmark legislation will distribute $4.5 billion, through a freight-specific competitive grant program and $6.3 billion through a freight formula program. These investments come at a critical time, as freight movements across all modes are expected to increase 42 percent by 2040.

“The FAST Act reflects many of the Coalition for America’s Gateways and Trade Corridors (CAGTC)’s long-held positions, including a minimum annual investment of $2 billion dedicated to freight infrastructure,” said Elaine Nessle, CAGTC Executive Director. “In passing the FAST Act, Congress showed a commitment to manufacturers, retailers, and farmers, all of whom rely on the multimodal freight network to get goods to market. I applaud Speaker Ryan, Senate Majority Leader McConnell, Committee leaders, and the Administration for swiftly advancing this piece of legislation, allowing our nation to begin making these critical investments as soon as possible.”

The FAST Act includes a modified version of the dual formula and competitive grant investment strategy that first appeared in the Administration’s GROW AMERICA Act. Like the Administration’s bill, which recognizes that freight does not move on highways alone and called for the creation of a federal, multimodal freight policy, the FAST Act requires the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) to designate a multimodal freight network to help direct state and private company investment decisions.

“We are so pleased that much of the Administration’s proposal was incorporated into the FAST Act,” said Sharon Neely, CAGTC chairman. “CAGTC urges quick and effective implementation by the Administration of these new freight programs and the project streamlining tools incorporated into the FAST Act. Given the Administration’s urging of Congress to pass a transportation bill, we also anticipate that the Administration will take all steps available to show lawmakers a smooth and quick implementation. Congress should monitor USDOT’s accomplishments to ensure real-world impact of this law and maximize the FAST Act’s potential to create new jobs and improve the economy.”

The investments provided by the FAST Act will support over 44 million jobs that depend directly on freight transportation. Historically, freight projects have had difficulty securing funds through traditional mechanisms, such as existing formula distributions, because they are often large-in-scale and frequently multimodal. H.R. 22 will provide vital investment for our goods movement network, thereby improving America’s ability to remain competitive in an increasingly global economy.
A commitment to investment in goods movement and dedicated funding for a freight program is critical to ensure a safe, efficient, reliable, multimodal supply chain that will continue to stoke the engine of commerce and support job growth. CAGTC has called for a comprehensive goods movement policy with funding commensurate to our nation’s vast system needs since its formation in 2001. CAGTC looks forward to working with lawmakers and administrators in the coming months and years to ensure that the freight network benefits from the FAST Act’s investment and policies provided by the FAST Act.

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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.