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Contact: Jeff Agnew
(202) 828-9100

WASHINGTON, DC (May 24, 2017) – The Coalition for America’s Gateways and Trade Corridors (CAGTC) commends the Administration’s initiative in releasing its targeted infrastructure investment approach, outlined in its Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Request, A New Foundation for American Greatness and the complementary 2018 Budget: Infrastructure Initiative fact sheet, while cautioning against any funding reductions to existing transportation programs.

“The President’s commitment to improving national economic competitiveness through strategic infrastructure investment is commendable, and in particular, we appreciate his dedication to investing $1 trillion and caution against any reductions in funding to existing transportation infrastructure programs. Key infrastructure principles released in the Administration’s 2018 Budget: Infrastructure Initiative reveal a targeted framework that stands to support increased investment in the multimodal freight network and foster desirable outcomes.

Since its formation in 2001, CAGTC has called for a freight-specific multimodal competitive grant program. The President’s call to ‘Encourage Self-Help’ as a principle supports competitive grants, such as the Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects (NSFHP) program and the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program. While formula programs invest through a standard 80 percent federal to 20 percent non-federal match, under competitive grant programs, applicants are encouraged to bring their best deal forward, rewarding innovative funding and financing arrangements.

We concur with the President’s principle ‘Leverage the Private Sector,’ and note that competitive grants have repeatedly shown their ability to attract non-federal dollars, including those coming from the private sector. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, every $1 of federal monies distributed through the TIGER program leverages $3.50 through other sources, including private funds. The first round of the NSFHP program yielded similar success: totaling nearly $800 million, grants will be combined with funding from federal, state, local, and private sources to support $3.6 billion in infrastructure investment. As the President correctly notes, while public-private partnerships will not be the solution to all infrastructure needs, they can help advance the Nation’s most important, regionally significant projects.

The President’s principle calling for ‘Targeted Federal Investments,’ aligns with CAGTC’s long-held priority calling for a national vision that guides long-term planning. Planning, with a particular focus on projects of national significance – or ‘transformative projects,’ as the Administration states – should endeavor to anticipate freight needs extending over multiple decades.

Unveiled during national Infrastructure Week and illustrating the substantial need for investment in goods movement infrastructure, CAGTC featured its Freight Can’t Wait booklet, which highlights 43 transformative freight projects of regional and national significance in need of federal partnership."

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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.