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Senators Lautenberg, Murray and Cantwell Introduce Legislation for New Freight Program

FREIGHT Act of 2010 is a major shift in national transportation policy to support economic growth with targeted investment in efficient, clean, multimodal infrastructure for the movement of goods

WASHINGTON, DC (July 22, 2010) – Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ), with co-sponsors Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA), today introduced the Focusing Resources, Economic Investment, and Guidance to Help Transportation Act of 2010 (FREIGHT Act), a landmark bill, leading the charge to transform America's transportation policy and investment by focusing on the freight network that enables goods and commodities to move about and reach their markets. The FREIGHT Act provides a visionary, comprehensive, systemic approach to infrastructure investment that addresses the nation's commerce needs while providing a solid foundation that will also help our nation meet its energy, environmental and safety goals. The bill also calls for the creation of a new National Freight Infrastructure Grants initiative – a competitive, merit-based program with broad eligibility for multimodal freight investment designed to focus funds where they will provide the most public benefit.

"Poor planning and underinvestment in our transportation infrastructure has led to increased congestion at our ports, highways, airports, and railways, and increases the cost of doing business. If we want to help U.S. businesses succeed and create new jobs, we need a freight transportation system that works better and can grow with the changing needs of the global economy," said Senator Lautenberg in his statement.

"The FREIGHT Act is a paradigm shift our CAGTC members have long advocated and represents a bold step toward ensuring our nation's economic competitiveness in the 21st century," said Mortimer Downey, CAGTC Chairman, Senior Advisor, Parsons Brinckerhoff and former U.S. Deputy Secretary of Transportation. "For the first time ever, the bill establishes a comprehensive freight policy with outcome-based goals and creates a broad multimodal, competitive freight-specific program to provide the infrastructure necessary to move this country's commerce and drive the economy."

The FREIGHT Act of 2010 directs the Department of Transportation (USDOT) to develop and implement two institutional advances that will improve and coordinate policy within the federal government and the states. The first is a National Freight Transportation Strategic Plan to guide and inform goods movement infrastructure investments in future years. In addition, it calls for the creation of an Office of Freight Planning and Development, led by an Assistant Secretary for Freight Planning and Development. The bill instructs USDOT to develop baselines, tools and methods within two years to measure progress.

"A truly multimodal national freight program that is accountable to measurable performance targets and benchmarks is something the U.S. has needed for a long time," said James Corless, director of Transportation for America. "We applaud Senator Lautenberg for recognizing that our freight system can move our goods from coast to coast and power the economy while also being part of the solution for many of our most pressing problems: air

quality, dangerous emissions, oil dependence, and congestion on our highways and interstates, to name just a few."

In developing the National Freight Transportation Policy, the FREIGHT Act also encourages concurrent improvements in air quality impacts, carbon emissions, energy use and public health and safety by establishing environmental goals to complement goals for reducing delays and improving travel time reliability on freight corridors, at gateways and heavy freight population centers. Similarly, the grant program sets criteria to prioritize projects that improve freight mobility and enhance economic growth, while incentivizing environmental improvements.

"Congress must modernize our outdated freight infrastructure to reduce its harmful environmental and public health impacts," said Kathryn Phillips, a transportation expert with the Environmental Defense Fund. "This important bill provides a roadmap to target federal investment to create a cleaner, more reliable freight system for the 21st century."

System performance is emphasized throughout the FREIGHT Act and projects will be judged on benefit-cost analysis. The significant overlap among public and private interests in the freight system is recognized through encouraged planning and cooperation with private sector interests, while the grant program leverages Federal investment by promoting non-Federal contributions to projects.

"The National Freight Infrastructure Investment Grants program proposed in this bill would be an important addition to the federal toolbox. It would help fund exactly the type of multi-modal, multi-jurisdictional, major transportation infrastructure projects that have historically been overlooked by the federal transportation investment process," said Chuck Baker, CAGTC Member and President of the National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association.

The Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors, Environmental Defense Fund and Transportation for America commend Senator Lautenberg and the other co-sponsors of this visionary and strategically important policy. The three organizations have agreed to work together in support of the FREIGHT Act and call upon all in the transportation community to join in support.

About CAGTC

The Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors (CAGTC) is a diverse coalition of more than 60 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. Website: www.tradecorridors.org Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CAGTC> Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/edit/?id=261369164334#!/pages/Coalition-for-Americas-Gateways-and-Trade-Corridors/261369164334>

About EDF

A leading national nonprofit organization, Environmental Defense Fund represents more than 700,000 members. Since 1967, Environmental Defense Fund has linked science, economics, law and innovative private-sector partnerships to create breakthrough solutions to the most serious environmental problems. Twitter: <http://twitter.com/EnvDefenseFund> Read our Way2Go blog at <http://blogs.edf.org/transportation> Website: www.edf.org. Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/EnvDefenseFund>.

About Transportation for America

Transportation for America is a growing, national coalition committed to creating a new national transportation program that will take America to the 21st Century by building a modernized infrastructure and healthy communities where people can live, work, and play. www.t4america.org

About National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association.

The National Railroad Construction and Maintenance Association is the national trade association organized to serve the needs of railroad contractors, suppliers, and the entire railroad and rail transit construction industry. www.nrcma.org

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