



2015 Legislative Priorities

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

22 JURISDICTIONS 5+ MILLION PEOPLE 300 ELECTED OFFICIALS



TRANSPORTATION FUNDING



WATER QUALITY PROTECTION



CLIMATE, ENERGY INNOVATION AND AIR QUALITY PROTECTION



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

SUPPORT TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Support Reauthorization of the Federal Transportation Act – Support federal funding of MAP 21 for a full six year period with additional funding to address the under-investment in the region’s transportation system.

Support Transportation Infrastructure Investment – Address the needs outlined in the region’s Financially Constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (CLRP) at both the federal and state level. The region’s aging transportation infrastructure is in urgent need of reconstruction and major rehabilitation that goes beyond routine maintenance and upkeep. Federal funding for these efforts has continued to decrease and is currently substantially inadequate.

Ensure Continuation of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act – Ensure the continuation of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) Act of 2008 beyond 2020 and through 2040 for our region to be able to maintain the Metro system in a state of good repair.

Support Funding of Momentum/Metro 2025 – Identify and enact means of funding the Momentum strategic plan and Metro 2025 in order to improve and expand the Metro system over the next ten years to keep up with projected growth and demand throughout the region. Actions include adding core capacity to the system—such as ensuring all 8-car Metro trains during rush hour and station improvements.

Increase the Internal Revenue Service Public Transportation Subsidy Program – Increase the amount of employer-provided transit fare subsidy eligible for tax relief under the Internal Revenue Service Public Transportation Subsidy Program (PTSP) from the current amount of \$130 to \$250 to match the tax relief amount provided for automobile parking. This tax benefit encourages the use of public transportation and therefore improves air quality, reduces traffic congestion, and conserves energy.

SUPPORT WATER QUALITY PROTECTION

Endorse Affordability Criteria – Endorse establishing affordability and cost-effectiveness criteria for financing water infrastructure projects.

Support Investments in Water Infrastructure – Support mechanisms such as tax credits, infrastructure banking, Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) funding, state revolving funds (SRFs), and maintain tax exemption status for municipal bonds.

Ensure Stormwater Regulatory Feasibility – Endorse legislation that supports a feasible pace for MS4 stormwater permits, and applies the “Maximum Extent Practicable” standard. Ensure that burden does not increase for local governments to compensate for delayed issuance of stormwater permits. Support flexibility for generating local funding for stormwater management.

Support Climate Resiliency Research- Support funding for technical support, and elimination of barriers for robust climate change analysis, adaptation planning, and implementation.

Ensure Local Government Input – Ensure that local governments are recognized as partners in making management decisions about the Chesapeake Bay and local water quality.

Grant Regulatory Flexibility – Support streamlining and prioritization of permits, such as the Integrated Permitting approach.

Support for Water Security – Support water security research, planning, and programmatic support.

SUPPORT CLIMATE, ENERGY INNOVATION AND AIR QUALITY PROTECTION

Advocate for Clean Energy Finance – Expand options and improve access to clean energy finance at the state and local levels, through measures such as Green Banks, Property Assessed Clean Energy, on-bill financing, Energy Savings Performance Contracts, and credit enhancement mechanisms. Establish or enable sustainable clean energy incentive programs, and remove barriers to third-party ownership.

Deploy Clean, Distributed Energy Generation Technology – Support policies that encourage deployment of clean, distributed energy generation technologies and infrastructure. Expand net metering programs to enable virtual net metering for all customer classes, increase utilities’ allowable renewable energy generating capacity, and raise system size caps where they limit the ability to use solar energy. Strengthen renewable portfolio standards and improve the effectiveness of renewable energy credit (REC) trading markets.

Improve Grid Resilience – Prioritize funding for energy-sector infrastructure improvements to improve grid resilience and reliability. Support policies and funding for energy security improvements such as microgrids, district energy systems, and storage technology, especially when coupled with clean energy generation. Support community-based efforts and public-private partnerships to improve climate and energy resilience at the local level.

Support Energy Innovation – Stimulate energy-sector innovation by utilities and private companies to increase transparency and access to data. Support regulatory and policy innovations to improve energy-sector performance, support clean and distributed energy, and deploy low and zero-emission vehicles and infrastructure – such as through performance-based utility compensation or alternative financing mechanisms for infrastructure investments.

Further Improve Air Quality – Support policies and funding that strengthen the region’s ability to meet current and future air quality standards for pollutants including ozone, particulate matter and carbon dioxide. The region has made significant progress in reducing pollution—in 2014 it recorded a second straight summer with No Code Red unhealthy air days—but it still does not meet federal ozone standards. EPA is currently considering more stringent standards to further protect public health.

SUPPORT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

Align Education and Job Creation – Encourage the executive and legislative branches of Virginia and Maryland to support legislation and programs that fund local job development and more closely align education and job creation.

Support Workforce Development at the Local Level – Support federal legislation and the Skills for America's Future initiative to focus on workforce development and job creation at the local level.

Support Local Governments and Activity Centers – Work with local governments to support sound land use planning which focuses on employer retention and new job growth in the region's mixed use Activity Centers.

About COG

COG is the regional council for the metropolitan Washington area with approximately 300 local, state and federal elected officials representing 22 local governments. COG also hosts and supports the National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board, our region's metropolitan planning organization (MPO) and the Metropolitan Washington Air Quality Committee, the tri-state air quality planning organization.

Region Forward is COG's vision. It's a commitment by COG and its member governments, who together seek to create a more accessible, sustainable, prosperous, and livable National Capital Region. COG's mission is to advance Region Forward by being a discussion forum, expert resource, and catalyst for action.

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