

# LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Supporting the region's transportation funding, water quality, climate and energy innovation, air quality, workforce development, and human services

January 2017



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The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is an independent, nonprofit association that brings area leaders together to address major regional issues in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. COG's membership is comprised of 300 elected officials from 23 local governments, the Maryland and Virginia state legislatures, and U.S. Congress.

## **CREDITS**

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# CERTAINTY AND ADEQUACY OF TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

## **Support State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOA)**

Expedite developing MAP-21 legislation of immediate enhanced authority for SSOAs of Metro and increase federal funding to support SSOA operations.

## **Support Dedicated Infrastructure Funding for the National Capital Region**

The funding needed to maintain the National Capital Region's railroad and highway infrastructure in a state of good repair is chronically underfunded. The importance of this infrastructure for the functioning of the local, state, and federal governments in our region cannot be overstated. Congress should ensure there is a dedicated source and sufficient amount of funding for the region's roadway and railway infrastructure. Specifically ensuring the continuation of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) through 2040 including \$150M in its annual appropriations for Metro's capital improvement budget.

## **Support Fixing the Deficit in the Federal Transportation Trust Fund (TTF)**

For several years there has been a gap between the TTF's revenue and spending – annual shortfalls that have been closed primarily with short-term measures. The FAST Act only provides funding through 2020 and covers those shortfalls through short term measures. This structural deficit has not been fixed and will return after 2020 with a continued growing deficit if not treated as a top priority.

## **Support Federal Funding for Operations of the Region's Metrorail System**

The Metrorail system is the center piece of the metropolitan Washington region's transportation system and the back bone of its economy. Almost half of all federal employees use the Metrorail and bus system to commute to work, yet there are no federal funds being provided for the operation of the system. The federal government should act to provide its share of funding for operating the Metrorail system that its employees and the region depend on.

## **Support Funding for Next Generation Transportation Systems**

The need for a more efficient and safer means of transportation is imperative to help achieve the nation's Energy, Efficiency, and Environmental quality goals. The private sector has made significant investments to advance the use of vehicles using alternative modes of energy, and technology assisted vehicle operations. Significant public sector investments are needed to make our public transportation infrastructure technology more efficient and safer for our residents. Governments should establish a new and dedicated source of funding to support a next generation public transportation system.

# WATER QUALITY PROTECTION

## **Support Investments in Water Infrastructure and Workforce Development**

Support mechanisms such as tax credits, infrastructure banking, Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) funding, state revolving funds (SRFs), and maintaining tax exemption status for municipal bonds. Ensure that investments built in local infrastructure to meet water permit load allocations and handle future population and economic growth are protected. Enhance infrastructure investments with investments in workforce development to ensure the availability of skilled water system operators.

## **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 and ensure that reporting requirements are reasonable.

## **Support Climate and Flood Resiliency Initiatives**

Support funding to address robust climate change analysis, adaptation and resiliency planning, flood control and management, and local implementation.

## **Ensure Local Government Input**

Ensure that local governments and wastewater and drinking water utilities are given opportunities to provide timely and meaningful input on management decisions about the Chesapeake Bay and local water quality.

## **Support Affordability and Regulatory Flexibility**

Support cost-effective approaches for scheduling and financing of water quality programs, including efforts for streamlining and prioritization of permits.

## **Support Water Security**

Support water quality, wastewater, and drinking water security and resiliency research, planning, and programmatic support.

## **Support Drinking Source Water Protection**

Support drinking water source protection policies and programs that ensure people’s basic need for a clean, safe, and abundant water supply is reliably met.

# CLIMATE AND ENERGY INNOVATION & AIR QUALITY PROTECTION

## **Support Deployment of Clean Energy Innovation and Technology**

Encourage and support investment in energy-sector innovation by utilities and private companies to increase energy efficiency performance and renewable energy deployment. Support regulatory and policy changes to improve transparency and access to data. Enable business model innovation and encourage and expand the adoption of energy efficiency and clean, distributed energy generation technologies and infrastructure, and support for low and zero-emission vehicles and infrastructure.

## **Expand Clean Energy Finance**

Expand options for and improve access to clean energy finance at the state and local levels. Foster cost effective and efficient market frameworks and reasonable regulatory frameworks that support clean energy investment across all sectors. Establish and enable key partnerships, institutions, agencies, plans, and programs to support sustainable clean energy incentives and lower the cost of doing business in the clean energy sector.

## **Improve Energy System Resilience**

Prioritize funding for energy-sector infrastructure to improve grid resilience and reliability. Support policies and funding for energy security improvements such as energy efficiency, 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.

## **Further Improve Air Quality**

Support policies and funding to strengthen the region's ability to meet current and future air quality standards. Expand efforts to increase and speed adoption of low-emitting technology solutions.

## **Ensure Local Government Input**

Ensure that local governments are recognized and given opportunities to provide timely and meaningful input on climate and clean energy programs.

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN SERVICES

## Align Education and Job Creation

Encourage the executive and legislative branches to support legislation and programs that fund local job development, career and technical education, and overall 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, and efforts to develop industry standard credentialing and skills programs for sectors experiencing job growth in the region.

## 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.

## Increase Availability of and Access to Mental Health Services

Work with local, state, and federal partners to increase access to and availability of mental health services throughout the region to include psychiatric hospital beds, drug treatment programs, counseling, and other outpatient services; continued expansion of crisis intervention, mental health courts, and diversion programs where treatment is indicated rather than incarceration; and re-entry programs to reduce recidivism rates of mental health consumers.

## Support School Nutrition

Support the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act that provides for continuation of the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Summer Food Service Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). The Act maintains strong nutrition standards, strengthens farm-to-school programs, streamlines regulations for community based providers, and leverages schools beyond the school day to expand the ability to reach youth during summer and weekends.

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