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State Transportation Departments Begin MAP-21 Implementation Process

After working for years for a transportation bill, state transportation departments now have the opportunity to implement many of the provisions of the new legislation.

The passage MAP-21, a two-year, \$105 billion surface transportation bill signed by President Obama on July 6, allows state DOTs to begin implementing the provisions of the bill, a welcome change from operating on a series of short-term extensions offering little certainty for projects.

"There are many things to like in this bill, including providing funding for surface transportation programs at current levels and extending user fees and the Highway Trust Fund through fiscal year 2016," said American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Executive Director John Horsley upon the completion of the bill. "We are also pleased that the legislation includes needed reforms to stretch taxpayer dollars with expanded innovative finance, improved efficiency with program consolidation, streamlined project delivery, and improved accountability with performance measures."

In order to prepare for implementation, AASHTO President Kirk Steudle directed the establishment of work groups that will focus on various aspects of the implementation process. These groups include:

- Project Delivery
- Performance Measures
- Planning, Asset Management, and Performance-Based Planning and Programming
- Finance
- Safety
- Freight
- Highways
- Transit

Two additional work groups were established to work on specific provisions of the bill: the Audit Subcommittee will address a provision requiring the U.S. Department of Transportation to audit toll operations, and a Special Strategic Highway Research Program 2 (SHRP2) Task Force will tackle the MAP-21 requirement stating 75 percent of states must agree to a percentage set aside of State Planning and Research funds for SHRP2 Implementation.

While states will be busy dealing with implementation, the two-year timeline means DOTs must also begin planning for a reauthorization of MAP-21. Congress will likely begin considering the next bill in early 2013, which means states must also begin reauthorization efforts.

AASHTO also created three new reauthorization work groups to work on Policy Development, Advocacy, and Research. The AASHTO Reauthorization Steering Committee will be serving as the overarching committee to oversee and coordinate the policy aspects of the work groups for the next reauthorization.

Additional information on MAP-21 is available at AASHTO's new MAP-21 website

(map21.transportation.org). The site will be updated regularly with new implementation information.

Questions regarding this article may be directed to editor@ashtojournal.org.