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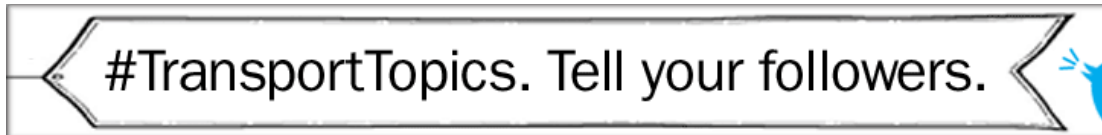
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Federal Officials Tell Freight Committee About Policy Plans

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WASHINGTON — In a reversal of roles, private citizens went to Capitol Hill to hear testimony from senators, representatives, executive branch officials and staff aides on freight transportation policy.

The legislators, all of whom serve on transportation committees, said they are committed to a long-term, fully funded surface transportation bill, although the members of the House said the stop-gap funding bill is a necessary if unfortunate intermediate step.

Peter Rogoff, the Department of Transportation's acting undersecretary, also spoke to members of the National Freight Advisory Committee on July 15. He said the administration's proposal for \$10 billion to be spent on freight projects over four years is aimed particularly at states desiring to work on multimodal projects with regional significance.



Jonathan S. Reiskin/Transport Topics

"This is about trying to move people in a multimodal insightful way," said Rogoff, whose nomination to become undersecretary on a permanent basis was approved by the Senate Commerce, Science and Technology Committee later that day.

John Drake, a deputy assistant secretary who works for Rogoff, said Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx designed the Grow America Act proposal as a two-step process.

"Let's get everyone excited about what we could have" as a transportation system, Drake said, and then come back to figure out funding mechanisms. Funding, though, has been an especially contentious issue with the House, the Senate and the administration far apart on how to fund a surface transportation program.

Owner-operator Terry Button is an NFAC member who said he liked what he heard from senators and the administration, but he remains highly skeptical about how well it will actually be applied.

"I wonder whether there is a true commitment from the administration to have a policy that is truly freight-friendly down to the local level," including trucking companies and drivers, shippers of freight and county or municipal governments, said Button. Button, of Rushville, New York, is a member of the Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association's board of directors and a hauler of agricultural commodities.

By Jonathan S. Reiskin
Associate News Editor

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