

Transportation

The President is strongly committed to ensuring that our transportation system remains safe, secure, and efficient, and that it continues to serve as the engine that drives our Nation's economy. Because economic activity and global trade are growing under the President's policies, our roads, railways, pipelines, public transit systems, airways and waterways are experiencing unprecedented increases in demand. This Administration is working to ensure that our transportation system has the capacity to accommodate the needs of a growing and prosperous America. The President's Budget builds on our past accomplishments and continues our efforts to build a highly effective and interconnected transportation system.

Since 2001, President Bush has:

- Addressed the needs of our Nation's transportation system through a broad and comprehensive list of proposals and achievements;
- Proposed increased investment and flexibility for our surface transportation programs (highways, highway safety, and transit):
 - Developed a multi-year proposal to increase investments in the Nation's highway and transit systems by \$45 billion – or 21% over the previous multi-year program – *without* increasing taxes;
 - Proposed to *double* the Federal funds available to States for highway safety infrastructure projects and to create far more effective incentives for the use of safety belts;
 - Proposed to give the States unprecedented flexibility in delivering projects and in administering their highway safety programs;
- Addressed the needs of aviation:
 - Helped stabilize the airline industry following the events of September 11, 2001, supporting the resurgence of a sector that supports 11 million jobs and 9% of our Nation's GDP;
 - Launched the *Next Generation Air Transportation System* initiative, designed to transform the Nation's aviation system and triple its capacity by the year 2025;
 - Secured enactment of the *VISION 100–Century of Aviation Reauthorization Act*, providing \$59 billion in funding over four years to finance airport capacity projects and improvements to the air traffic control system;
 - Deregulated airline computer reservation systems, encouraging competition and simplifying the process for air travelers;
- Improved highway and truck safety:
 - Achieved key highway safety goals, including increasing the national safety belt usage rate to 79% in 2003—the highest level in history;
 - Awarded, in the last year alone, \$47.8 million in grants to States that have improved highway safety by lowering the legal threshold for impaired driving to .08 blood alcohol concentration (BAC) (such laws are in effect, as of July 2004, in 49 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico);

- Facilitated a continuing reduction in the fatality rate for accidents involving large trucks, helping to save an estimated 1,291 lives in 2003 alone;
- Proposed increased funding and improved accessibility for transit programs:
 - Proposed, as part of SAFETEA, a record \$2.1 billion for rural transit programs, a 75% increase over the last six years, in order to assist the 40% of rural counties that have no available public transportation services;
 - Developed the *United We Ride* program to coordinate and simplify activities under 62 Federally funded transportation service programs to improve mobility, job opportunities and access to services for people who are transit dependent;
- Supported the maritime sector and expanded its security measures:
 - Continued strong support of a vibrant U.S.-flag commercial fleet, which provided 40 Maritime Administration Ready Reserve Fleet vessels and over 5,000 merchant mariners for critical sealift capacity to the Department of Defense in support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom;
 - Secured enactment of an expanded Maritime Security Program;
- Supported greater global connectivity through a more efficient domestic and global transportation system that enables economic growth and development and strengthens our ties to countries around the world:
 - Secured key new bilateral air service agreements with China, Indonesia, and Vietnam that will improve access for U.S. carriers and passengers, facilitate trade, and deliver substantial economic benefits;
 - Signed a sweeping new maritime agreement with China that opens the Chinese market to U.S.-flag shipping companies for an extensive range of new business activities;
 - Provided critically needed technical assistance and personnel to transportation infrastructure reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq;
- Addressed congestion in our transportation system:
 - Signed an Executive Order to enhance environmental stewardship and streamline the decision-making process in connection with major transportation projects;
 - Moving promptly, using newly acquired statutory authority, to reduce airport delays and congestion arising from the recent rebound in air travel;
 - Proposed, as part of SAFETEA, additional initiatives to reduce the time it takes to make decisions on badly needed transportation projects – and to do so without compromising environmental protection;
 - Announced a *National Freight Action Agenda* that will facilitate development of major freight projects and promote intelligent transportation technologies to improve the capability of the Nation's transportation system to move current and future levels of freight traffic safely and efficiently;
- Moved to improve the quality and safety of our Nation's rail system:
 - Developed a plan to reform the Nation's intercity passenger rail system that would give States the control to develop train routes and services that meet their public transportation needs;

- Issued a comprehensive, intermodal action plan for reducing railroad-related casualties at grade crossings. This year, total rail related accidents/incidents declined 4.6% compared with the same period in 2003;
- Promoted the development of environmentally-friendly vehicles:
 - Announced a \$1.2 billion Hydrogen Fuel Initiative to reverse America's growing dependence on foreign oil by developing the technology needed for commercially viable hydrogen-powered fuel cells—a way to power cars and trucks that produces no pollution and no greenhouse gases – by 2020;
 - Issued a final rule to boost the Corporate Average Fuel Economy of light trucks by 1.5 mpg by 2007, the first such increase since 1996. This action will assist in furthering fuel conservation while protecting motor vehicle safety and the economic vitality of the auto industry.

The President's FY 2005 Budget modifies the Administration's Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act of 2003 (SAFETEA) as outlined in the FY 2004 Budget by increasing the total six-year investment in highways and transit programs to \$256 billion (a \$45 billion or 21% increase over the previous six-year bill), without raising taxes or exceeding the government's capacity to fund this investment in improved infrastructure and safety programs. With safety as its first priority, SAFETEA is dedicated to reducing roadway accidents and creates a new safety belt incentive program to encourage States to enact tough safety belt laws.

- As proposed in the President's Budget, safety programs through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) would receive \$233 million and State grants for highway safety programs would receive \$456 million – a combined \$18 million increase over FY 2004;
- The President's Budget also seeks a \$26 million (6%) increase for programs that support commercial vehicle safety and research through the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA);
- The Budget provides funding for airspace modernization projects to improve aviation safety and sustain capacity to ensure safety of the national airspace. The enactment of a four-year FAA reauthorization, Vision 100—Century of Aviation will help maintain America's excellent air safety record by authorizing \$59 billion through 2007, a 31% increase for aviation programs over the last four-year reauthorization. In addition, the FY 2005 Budget will provide \$572 million to help FAA to mitigate the environmental impacts of aviation emissions and noise. Also, Federal lenders will be required to inform prospective homebuyers of properties within airport noise contours. FAA also will continue to work with industry to increase aircraft fuel efficiency;
- The President's proposed Passenger Rail Investment Reform Act would allow States and local communities to decide how to integrate intercity passenger rail into their transportation plans, enabling them to make more services available to respond to the needs of more travelers nationwide. The FY 2005 Budget seeks \$900 million for Amtrak, and supports significant increases for the intercity passenger rail system (an additional \$500 million annually) should the President's reforms be enacted.

For Other Information About the President's Accomplishments and Proposals:

FY 2005 Budget

Department of Transportation: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2005/transportation.html>