

# 2009 TEX-21 LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

TEX-21 is a non-profit group comprised of Texas cities, counties, trade associations, and resource agencies whose purpose is to improve multi-modal transportation opportunities for the State and Nation. Improving transportation infrastructure is one of the most essential factors in keeping the overall economy moving, and it is essential that various levels of government appropriately invest in improving all aspects of multi-modal transportation. TEX-21 has attempted to put together a Legislative program that is cognizant of the urban and rural issues as well as the overall economic environment that the country and state are currently facing. The overriding principal for our State and Federal elected officials is to ensure that the multi-modal transportation systems are funded sufficiently and that the various levels of government take their respective lead roles in accomplishing that task. TEX-21 is comprised of four standing committees: Federal, State, Regional & Local, and Transit. The following is the adopted program to be presented to our State and Federal elected officials and trade associations for their consideration.

## **FEDERAL**

### F . 1 - OVERALL PRINCIPLES

- F. 1. 1 Strengthen working relationships with members, trade associations, and the TEX-21 Congressional Caucus to analyze, study, and provide solutions to the State's infrastructure needs.
- F. 1. 2 Establish a National Multi-modal Transportation Infrastructure Needs Assessment Commission, comprised of appointed representatives from the Legislative Branch and Executive Branch, as well as select members of the private sector to regularly assess the needs of the nation's transportation infrastructure.
- F. 1. 3 Ensure that the multi-modal transportation system is adequately funded. It is essential that the federal government take the lead role in funding multi-modal transportation needs to accommodate the rising population and increased movement of people, freight and goods.

### F. 2 - HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES

- F. 2. 1 Pursue new and expand existing revenue sources for multi-modal transportation including the Federal Motor Fuels Tax, tolling, and the use of technology to more appropriately assess fees to users.
- F. 2. 2 Index federal motor fuel tax to federal CPI beginning in 2010.
- F. 2. 3 Pursue an increase of Texas' return of Federal Motor Fuels Tax to a minimum of 95%.

### F. 3 - TRANSIT

- F. 3. 1 Encourage improved multi-modal connectivity to transit systems and airport systems.
- F. 3. 2 Support initiatives that mitigate highway congestion by incorporating bus rapid transit (BRT) corridors into the highway projects.
- F. 3. 3 Encourage streamlining of New Starts and Small Starts application procedures.

### F. 4 - FREIGHT RAIL

- F. 4. 1 Support the creation of a National Freight Trust Fund that will provide a stable, sustainable revenue source for the expansion and rehabilitation of the nation's freight movement infrastructure.
- F. 4. 2 Pursue federal money to be allocated to the Texas Rail Relocation and Improvement Fund to aid the efficient movement of rail and passenger traffic through and within Texas.
- F. 4. 3 Support additional funding of quiet zoning for freight rail.
- F. 4. 4 Pursue federal funding to improve or eliminate the most critical at-grade rail crossings.

### F. 5 - PASSENGER RAIL

- F. 5. 1 Support initiatives to mitigate congestion through the development of high speed rail, defined as intercity passenger rail capable of speeds in excess of 200 mph.
- F. 5. 2 Support measures that supply sufficient funding to increase the capacity, efficiency, and accessibility to passenger rail service.
- F. 5. 3 Support additional funding of quiet zoning for passenger rail.

### F. 6 - AVIATION

- F. 6. 1 Support the expedited reauthorization of the FAA.
- F. 6. 2 Support the Essential Air Service Program and the Small Community Air Service Program.
- F. 6. 3 Support for the timely adoption of measures that will modernize and fully fund the air traffic control system.

### F. 7 - PORTS

- F. 7. 1 Pursue initiatives that would facilitate greater velocity and throughput of goods and passengers through and near ports.
- F. 7. 2 Ensure effective and cooperative implementation of federal port security programs while minimizing the impact to the flow of commerce.
- F. 7. 3 Support adequate federal appropriations for operation and maintenance dredging of Texas ports through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

## F. 8 - OTHER

- F. 8. 1 Increase the number of Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) officers in Texas to increase security and efficiency.
- F. 8. 2 Support increased federal investment in multi-modal transportation infrastructure to encourage job creation and positive economic growth.

## **STATE**

### S. 1 - OVERALL PRINCIPLES

- S. 1. 1 Strengthen working relationships with members, trade associations, and the Legislative Caucus to analyze, study, and provide solutions to the state's infrastructure needs.
- S. 1. 2 Create a Center for Strategic Multi-modal Transportation Solutions housed at the Texas Transportation Institute, College Station, Texas whose objective is to analyze current and future multi-modal transportation problems, identify best practices and potential solutions, and assist in the formulation of long-range, strategic multi-modal transportation alternatives.
- S. 1. 3 Urge the Legislature to ensure that all current sources of transportation revenue are being used fully, appropriately, and efficiently before considering any additional taxes or user fees.
- S. 1. 4 Ensure that the multi-modal transportation system is adequately funded. It is essential to ensure that sufficient revenue is generated and allocated to address the State's growing transportation needs to encourage positive economic growth, replace aging infrastructure, prepare for a rising population, and the increased efficiency of movement of freight and goods.

### S. 2 - HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES

- S. 2. 1 Pursue ending or reducing diversions, starting with funding DPS out of general revenues and not transportation revenues.
- S. 2. 2 Pursue the issuance of the full amount of debt already authorized by the State of Texas.
- S. 2. 3 Support indexing of the State Motor Fuels Tax to the State CPI, but not to exceed 5% annually.
- S. 2. 4 Pursue the establishment of reasonable standards for private investment that allow public-private partnerships for transportation infrastructure projects at the discretion of local communities.
- S. 2. 5 Support increasing the State Motor Fuels Tax to fund additional roads as an alternative to the construction of additional toll roads.

### S. 3 - TRANSIT

- S. 3. 1 Support transit exemption for transit buses and related transit equipment from motor fuel tax.
- S. 3. 2 Monitor legislation that empowers metropolitan regions to enact a local option transportation tax with voter approval.
- S. 3. 3 Support initiatives that mitigate highway congestion by incorporating bus rapid transit (BRT) corridors into the highway projects.

### S. 4 - FREIGHT RAIL

- S. 4. 1 Pursue appropriation of funds to the Texas Rail Relocation and Improvement Fund.
- S. 4. 2 Support the allocation of State funding to improve or eliminate the most critical at-grade rail crossings.
- S. 4. 3 Support funding of quiet zoning for freight rail.

### S. 5 - PASSENGER RAIL

- S. 5. 1 Support measures that supply sufficient funding to increase the capacity, efficiency, and accessibility to passenger rail service.
- S. 5. 2 Support additional funding for quiet zoning for passenger rail.
- S. 5. 3 Monitor the State's role in complying in federal high speed rail initiatives.

### S. 6 - AVIATION

- S. 6. 1 Support using a portion of existing sales tax revenues to match incoming federal revenues that will go into a Texas Airport Revenue Fund.

### S. 7 - PORTS

- S. 7. 1 Pursue initiatives that would facilitate greater velocity and throughput of goods and passengers through and near ports.
- S. 7. 2 Support measures that will provide for the improvement of port safety and security.
- S. 7. 3 Ensure connectivity of seaports with major land transportation corridors.

## **REGIONAL & LOCAL**

### R. 1 - OVERALL PRINCIPLES

- R. 1. 1 Strengthen working relationships with members, trade associations, and both the TEX-21 Congressional and Legislative Caucuses in order to better analyze, study, and provide solutions to the states infrastructure needs.

- R. 1. 2 Create a Center for Strategic Multi-modal Transportation Solutions housed at the Texas Transportation Institute, College Station, Texas whose objective is to analyze current and future multi-modal transportation problems, identify best practices and potential solutions, and assist in the formulation of long-range, strategic multi-modal transportation alternatives.
- R. 1. 3 Ensure that the multi-modal transportation system is adequately funded. It is essential to ensure that sufficient revenue is generated and allocated to address the State's growing transportation needs to encourage positive economic growth, replace aging infrastructure, prepare for a rising population, and the increased efficiency of movement of freight and goods.

#### R. 2 - FREIGHT RAIL

- R. 2. 1 Support funding of quiet zoning for railroads
- R. 2. 2 Support allocation of State funding to improve or eliminate the most critical at-grade rail crossings.
- R. 2. 3 Pursue appropriations of funds to the Texas Rail Relocation & Improvement Fund.

#### R. 3 - PASSENGER RAIL

- R. 3. 1 Support regional rail initiatives.
- R. 3. 2 Support measures that supply sufficient funding to increase the capacity, efficiency, and accessibility to passenger rail service.
- R. 3. 3 Support funding for quiet zoning for railroads.

#### R. 4 - OTHER PRIORITIES

- R. 4. 1 Appropriate to the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan Program, all funds collected for TERP, including those funds designated for program administration, verification, air quality research, and technology development, and authorize their use for improving air quality in nonattainment and affected counties.

## **TRANSIT**

#### T. 1 - OVERALL PRINCIPLES

- T. 1. 1 Strengthen working relationships with members, trade associations, and both the TEX-21 Congressional and Legislative Caucuses in order to better analyze, study, and provide solutions to the states infrastructure needs.
- T. 1. 2 Establish a National Multi-modal Transportation Infrastructure Needs Assessment Commission, comprised of appointed representatives from the Legislative Branch and Executive Branch, as well as select members of the

private sector to regularly assess the needs of the nation's multi-modal transportation infrastructure.

- T. 1. 3 Ensure that the multi-modal transportation system is adequately funded. It is essential to ensure that sufficient revenue is generated and allocated to address the State's growing transportation needs to encourage positive economic growth, replace aging infrastructure, prepare for a rising population, and the increased efficiency of movement of freight and goods.
- T. 1. 4 Create a Center for Strategic Multi-modal Transportation Solutions housed at the Texas Transportation Institute, College Station, Texas whose objective is to analyze current and future multi-modal transportation problems, identify best practices and potential solutions, and assist in the formulation of long-range, strategic multi-modal transportation alternatives.

## T. 2 - FREIGHT RAIL

- T. 2. 1 Support funding of quiet zoning for railroads.
- T. 2. 2 Pursue federal funding to improve or eliminate the most critical at-grade rail crossings.

## T. 3 - PASSENGER RAIL

- T. 3. 1 Support transit exemption for transit buses and related transit equipment from motor fuel tax.
- T. 3. 2 Monitor legislation to empower metropolitan regions to enact a local option transportation tax with voter approval.
- T. 3. 3 Support regional rail initiatives.
- T. 3. 4 Support increased funding for transit.