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Advocacy Position Statement

Goods Movement

Statement of Purpose

The American Public Works Association (APWA) seeks to inform elected officials, transportation policy-makers and decision-makers at all levels of government and the public at-large of its stated position on goods movement in the nation's transportation system.

Statement of Position

APWA recognizes the economic importance of efficient the movement of goods in our nation's infrastructure. Local governments own about 75 percent of the nearly four million-mile roadway network, nearly 51 percent of the nation's bridges and access to marine and aviation terminal facilities. Through this network, local public works officials play an important role in developing, maintaining, and operating facilities that connect to the interstate, marine and aviation goods movement network.

Federal policy should reflect investments to ensure safe and efficient access to the national highway system that supports intercity, interstate, marine, and aviation commercial goods movement corridors. Support of goods movement is critical to local, regional and national economic development and job creation. Roads and transit are critical links in this network and efforts must be made to protect and enhance access to airport and marine terminal facilities to ensure their long-term role in facilitating goods movement.

Federal funding needs to reflect the growing need for infrastructure to support the efficient movement of goods to locations within our nation and the transport of exports to foreign markets.

Background and Rationale

APWA recognizes the need for the efficient movement of goods as vital to the economy and social well-being. Local public works officials have a role to play in at least the following areas:

- Aviation - Decisions related to development and operation of general aviation, cargo airports, and commercial airports.

- Water Ports and Terminals - Planning and decisions on location of intermodal, water-rail-truck facilities and transportation access.
- Roads – Planning, construction, operations and maintenance of existing and future local and regional road networks that link to the interstate highway system and other goods movement modes.
- Rail - Coordination of alignment, schedules and speed as rail corridors move through urban zones.

Both at the level of international trade and at household distribution, increases are expected in freight movement. Studies forecast a dramatic increase in US maritime trade, which will lead to more domestic freight movements. The national freight system is intermodal: the connections between the modes (port-rail, port-highway, highway-rail, highway-aviation) must be enhanced to support this coming growth. Strategies should include a focus on safety improvements to minimize intermodal conflicts or delays, efficiency improvements to reduce supply chain costs and environmental impacts, additional capacity where constricted and regulatory changes to deliver projects faster.

Freight movement (measured as vehicle miles traveled) is increasing faster than household vehicle miles traveled. As more Internet commerce is conducted, freight and light-duty commercial vehicles trips increase to bring those purchases to the delivery point.

Furthermore, transportation systems influence economic development patterns and place demands on other public services such as water supply, stormwater management, and waste disposal. Development and operation of such transportation facilities and services as airports, marine terminals, and public transit place extensive demands on road networks and responsible agencies.

APWA believes partnerships between governments at all levels and the transportation industry, including water, air, rail, bus, and trucking, are needed to maximize the potential of existing and new services. Cooperation through these partnerships can create improved access to air and water terminals while maximizing the efficiency of the surface transportation systems.

APWA recognizes support of goods movement involves a long-term policy commitment that includes the operation, maintenance and modernization of infrastructure and related private investments to assure streamlined, seamless movement of goods across state lines and international borders.

Sponsor

Transportation Committee