



PORTS-TO-PLAINS

ALLIANCE

Securing the Benefits of Commerce to
North America's Energy & Agricultural Heartland

News Release

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State Transportation Funding and Ports-to-Plains

Since 2008, expansion of the Ports-to-Plains Alliance Corridors has come primarily through the various state departments of transportation including both state and federal transportation funding. As discussed last week, federal funding for the past ten years has come through the state DOTs. The state DOTs combine the federal funds with state funds to carry out each state's transportation program. While the process of planning the funding and construction scheduling of highway projects varies across the states in the Ports-to-Plains region, the Alliance works closely with each DOT to advocate for funding expansion projects. Governors, state legislatures, transportation commissions, regional planning efforts and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) all have differing roles across the region in determining how transportation funds are used.

As with federal funding, the base for state transportation funding is state fuel tax. The same issue of vehicle fuel efficiency has also negatively impacted state fuel tax revenues. As a result states have looked for ways to address those negative impacts. In some of the Ports-to-Plains states, state legislatures have acted to increase fuel taxes in the past few years. Wyoming increased its fuel tax 10 cents per gallon in 2013. South Dakota increased its fuel tax by 6 cents per gallon in 2015. Nebraska increased its fuel tax by 6 cents a gallon in 2015.

Additionally in 2011, the Nebraska Unicameral approved the Build Nebraska Act, which committed one-quarter of a cent out of the state's 5.5-cent sales tax to roads projects.

New Mexico finished the four-lane expansion of the Ports-to-Plains corridor across northern New Mexico through a bonding program. North Dakota's legislature has provided significant funding to the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway and other western North Dakota infrastructure from oil and gas severance taxes.

Texas voters have passed several ballot questions including Proposition 14: State Highway Fund Revenue Bonds backed by the State Highway Fund (2003); Proposition 12: General Obligation Bond Projects (2007); Proposition 1: a portion of oil and gas tax revenues that typically go into the Economic Stabilization Fund will be deposited to the State Highway Fund (2014); and last year Proposition 7: dedicated portions of revenue from the state's general sales and use tax as well as from the motor vehicle sales and rental tax to the State Highway Fund for non-tolled projects.

These state legislatures and voters recognized the relationship between transportation and economic development.

-30-

Ports-to-Plains is a grassroots alliance of over 275 communities and businesses, including alliance partners Heartland Expressway, Theodore Roosevelt Expressway and Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor Coalition, whose mission is to advocate for a robust international transportation infrastructure to promote economic security and prosperity throughout North America's energy and agricultural heartland including Mexico to Canada. Additional information on the Ports-to-Plains Alliance is available at <http://www.portstoplains.com/>.

Graphic:

