



PORTS-TO-PLAINS ALLIANCE

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

NEWS RELEASES

[Putting the National Interest First: National Journal Transportation Blog](#)

By Jack Schenendorf, Counsel, Covington & Burling LLP

Jack represents the Ports-to-Plains Alliance on transportation matters.

This week's question focuses on some of the challenges—such as partisan politics and parochial interests—facing Congress and the Administration as they attempt to enact a multi-year surface transportation bill. Also this week, we just so happen to be celebrating the birthdays of Presidents George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, two Presidents who were very much concerned that partisan politics and parochial interests could weaken America and keep it from achieving greatness...

[Comments of Ports-to-Plains Alliance on House and Senate Surface Transportation Reauthorization Proposals](#)

The Ports-to-Plains Alliance will have staff in Washington, DC during the week of March 5, 2012 visiting with Congressional offices about the House and Senate Transportation Reauthorization bills. The Alliance is looking forward to visiting with the Ports-to-Plains Alliance Caucus leadership and committee leadership about the importance of the national system to rural transportation and economic development.

The main Ports-to-Plains Alliance talking points are listed below:

As the House and Senate complete action on their respective bills and prepare to go to conference to work out the differences between the measures, we urge you to complete this process expeditiously. It is important to stabilize the Highway Trust Fund and the important programs it finances.

The Ports-to-Plains Alliance continues to support the transportation policy recommendations that we have shared with you in the past. We encourage you to ensure that the final bill recognizes the unique needs and challenges of Rural America, especially with respect to rural multi-state corridors and freight transportation.

There are two specific areas we want to raise at this point: planning and multi-state corridor development.

Planning

If there is to be a real governmental partnership in transportation, then rural local officials need to have a meaningful seat at the table. The planning process should ensure that State officials "cooperate" or "coordinate" with rural local officials, rather than simply "consulting" them.

The status of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) in areas with a population between 50,000 and 200,000 should not be weakened. It is vital that these MPOs continue to be involved in the statewide planning process.

Multi-State Corridor Development

Many rural multi-state corridors, like the Ports-to-Plains Alliance Corridor from Mexico to Canada, are experiencing large growth in the amount of freight being transported on a daily basis. These corridors are often serviced by inadequate 2-lane roads with long distances between population centers, steep grades, more dramatic weather conditions, and inadequate safety designs. The result is an antiquated road that decreases productivity, increases congestion, and increases fatalities and injuries.

The final bill must be crafted in a way that focuses on resources for these inadequate multistate corridors and makes them eligible for any programs or set-asides targeted at freight corridors. Volume of freight must not be the sole determinant.

While we recognize that significantly increased funding for transportation is not politically feasible at this time, we nevertheless urge Congress to provide the highest level of resources possible and certainly not less than current levels.

[Petition to Support Construction of Keystone XL Pipeline](#)

The Keystone XL pipeline project could provide an estimated \$20 billion in value to the United States economy, according to an independent analysis conducted by The Perryman Group. The project would expand existing pipelines to connect facilities in Alberta, Canada to facilities along the Texas Gulf Coast. All told, at least 20,000 American workers would be employed in building the 1,700-mile pipeline. The estimated investment to build the pipeline is \$7 billion.

What's more, owners of the Keystone Pipeline would pay an estimated \$5.2 billion in property taxes to states along the pipeline route during the operational life of the pipeline.

"The construction of the Keystone XL pipeline would deliver an additional 700,000 to 830,000 barrels of oil per day to the U.S. from Canada, the U.S.'s largest supplier of oil. Not only is the delay preventing additional imports from Canada, it is also preventing the creation of thousands of private-sector jobs. Building the pipeline would directly create 20,000 truly shovel-ready jobs; the Canadian Energy Research Institute estimates that current pipeline operations and the addition of the Keystone XL pipeline would create 179,000 American jobs by 2035." — The Heritage Foundation

[Upcoming Ports-to-Plains Alliance Activities](#)

- March 26-28 - [Modular Construction & Prefabrication North America](#), Calgary, AB
- April 2 - Northern Ports-to-Plains Alliance Task Force, Billings, MT
- April 16-20 - Washington DC Fly-in, Energy Mini-Summit, Board of Directors Meeting, Washington, DC
- July 19-20 - Ports-to-Plains Board of Directors Meeting, Limon, CO
- October 2-4 - Ports-to-Plains Alliance Annual Conference, Medicine Hat, AB



TRANSPORTATION

[TxDOT Anticipates Future Funding Opportunities and Plans for Priority Projects Around the State](#)

TxDOT said today that it is planning on leveraging as much as an additional \$2 billion over the next two years to facilitate construction on some of the states' high priority projects. The additional funding comes from more efficient and effective ways of managing tax dollars and an anticipation of future federal funding.

After an intensive several month effort of scrubbing project budgets, analyzing federal funding opportunities, and embracing best practices in money management, the agency estimates it can bring online approximately \$2 billion in additional projects.

"This additional one-time funding provides great opportunity to accelerate some of the state's most critical projects," said Phil Wilson, Executive Director of TxDOT. "We must ensure these dollars are put to the best use throughout Texas."

The TxDOT team has been directed to work directly with the state's Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's), local communities, and the Texas Transportation Commission to see that priorities are met and determine how to pay for them...

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

[MATTHEW WALLER: Trading future with Canada bright](#)

Canada isn't the first country I associate with international travel and Texas. Mexico holds that place. At the West Texas Trade Summit this week, participants learned a little more about our northern partners in trade.



The summit, in its third year, brought together people in the southern task force of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor plan.

Part of the Ports-to-Plains Alliance stretches with more than 2,300 miles of highways and Interstates through Canada and Mexico.

Michael Reeves, the president of the alliance, spoke to city officials and visitors from Mexico, Del Rio and San Angelo about Canada, specifically Alberta...



ENERGY

[Texas exports spike higher on energy goods](#)

Texas exports of fuels, computers and other goods soared by \$43 billion last year to reach \$249.9 billion, far ahead of exports from any other state, the U.S. Commerce Department's International Trade Administration announced Thursday.

California, the second-largest exporter, sold \$159.4 billion worth of goods abroad last year.

"Literally about one-sixth of the country's exports now come from Texas. This is awesome," said Mike Peng, a professor at the University of Texas at Dallas' Jindal School of Management. "The regional advantage of manufacturing and producing in Texas is now stronger than other states."

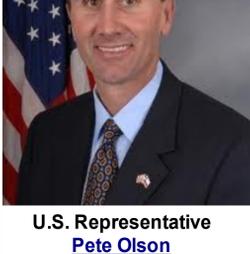
Diesel and other refined petroleum products accounted for much of the surge. With U.S. oil consumption down, Texas petroleum exports were up \$18.2 billion last year, reaching \$51.3 billion...

[OPINION: Pipe down](#)

[The Dis-United States of Gas Prices: Why Fuel Is So Cheap in Denver](#)

[Colorado Governor: Hickenlooper's spiel in oil, gas ad irks environmentalists](#)

[Keystone XL: Obama's Critics May Be Muffed By Pipeline Construction](#)



U.S. Representative
[Pete Olson](#)
(CA)
Ports-to-Plains Alliance
Caucus Member

THANK YOU VISIONARIES

Without your leadership and support, our continued success would not be possible.

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[Congressional Ports-to-Plains Caucus](#) *Support Rural Transportation and Economic Development*

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