

JPACT Worksheet

Agenda Item Title: Considering endorsement of the federal *Bridges and Safety Infrastructure for Community Success (BASICS) Act*

Presenters: Betsy Emery, Federal Affairs Advisor, Oregon Metro

Contact for this worksheet/presentation: Betsy Emery, Betsy.Emery@oregonmetro.gov

Purpose/Objective

Following the discussion of the federal surface transportation reauthorization process at the April 2026 JPACT meeting, Chair Lewis directed staff to bring a letter of support for the *Bridges and Safety Infrastructure for Community Success (BASICS) Act* to JPACT's May meeting for consideration.

The draft letter for consideration (attached) is modeled from a template provided by the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations. The letter is addressed to the Oregon House delegation given that the bill was introduced in the House and there is no Senate companion bill at this time.

Background

The BASICS Act (H.R. 7437) is bipartisan legislation that was introduced by Rep. McDonald Rivet (D-Mich.) and Rep. Bresnahan (R-Pa.). The bill proposes targeted updates to existing federal transportation programs to repair bridges, strengthen safety, improve accountability and transparency, expand local access to funding, and move projects from planning to completion faster. By reinforcing collaboration across federal, state, regional, and local partners, the bill helps ensure projects move efficiently and deliver real results on the ground.

The BASICS Act is comprehensive legislation that is endorsed by several national organizations, reflecting broad support from local and regional governments nationwide. Endorsers include the National League of Cities, National Association of Counties, Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations, the U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Association of Development Organizations, National Association of Regional Councils, American Public Works Association and the National Association of County Engineers.

Many provisions of the BASICS Act are closely aligned with JPACT's previously adopted federal legislative priorities. The primary goals of the legislation are described below, along with a description of how it relates to JPACT's federal legislative agenda.

- **Invests In Repairing Bridges:** The BASICS Act builds on the Bridge Formula Program established in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to continue fixing the nation's most deficient bridges, with a focus on both state- and locally owned infrastructure. Unlike prior approaches, the BASICS Act ensures that funding for locally owned bridges is proportional to the number of locally owned bridges in each state and directs these funds to the worst-condition bridges regardless of ownership.

These provisions align with JPACT's legislative priorities to preserve the Bridge Formula Funding Program, maintain funding for bridges generally, and maintain a state of good repair.

- **Focuses On Road Safety:** The BASICS Act strengthens the Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) by increasing overall safety funding, directing safety dollars to high-risk roads, and preventing states from transferring HSIP funds away from safety priorities. The

bill directs state DOTs to deliver 25% of HSIP funding to regional priority projects in both urban and rural areas, giving local governments direct access to capital for proven safety projects. These provisions build on the success of the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) program by providing a source of capital to begin implementing the safety action plans that SS4A grants have supported.

These provisions align with JPACT's legislative priorities to "maintain funding and policy focus on safety for all road users," deliver high impact projects that improve safety outcomes, "prioritize funding awards for projects that will reduce fatal and serious traffic-related injuries," and renew the Safe Streets and Roads for All program.

- **Delivers Regional Priority Projects Faster:** The BASICS Act increases funding for the Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) program. STBG is the largest and most flexible federal transportation formula program, and includes dedicated funding that flows to MPOs like Metro to support federally required planning activities, capital to construct local agency projects, alternative transportation, and carbon mitigation programs. Increased STBG funding gives states and regions greater capacity to advance projects in the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Plan (MTIP).

These provisions align with JPACT's legislative priorities to "continue advancing locally important infrastructure" and "streamline deployment of federal funds."

- **Increases MPO Planning Resources:** In addition to expanding STBG funding, the BASICS Act increases Metropolitan Planning (PL) formula funding, which supports Metro in completing federally required MPO activities. The bill expands eligible uses of PL funding to include the full project development lifecycle, including early scoping, data and modeling, and multi-modal systems planning, allowing MPOs to more fully develop projects in addition to identifying them. The bill also provides dedicated funding to Rural Transportation Planning Organizations so rural areas can consistently move projects through the development pipeline. Strong planning leads to better project selection, faster delivery, and smarter investments, ensuring both rural and metropolitan regions can advance projects that reflect local priorities and long-term needs.

These provisions align with JPACT's legislative priority to maintain MPO planning funding.

Outcome

JPACT members will consider whether to send a letter to the Oregon House delegation expressing support for the *BASICS Act*. If approved, Metro's Federal Affairs Advisor will format the letter and share it with the delegation's D.C. and in-district staff.

What has changed since JPACT last considered this issue/item?

There have not been any changes to this legislation since the April 2026 JPACT meeting when it was originally discussed. There have been some advancements in discussions about the surface transportation reauthorization bill as a whole. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chair Rep. Graves has announced desire to mark up a draft of the bill in the middle of May. While he has delayed these mark ups multiple times before, it's clear that conversations about how transportation funding will be divided are underway. Amidst that backdrop, it's important for JPACT to inform the Oregon delegation about the transportation-related bills of significance.

What packet material do you plan to include?

- JPACT's legislative priorities for the federal surface transportation reauthorization
- AMPO one-pager about the BASICS Act