



**Federal Legislative Agenda
for the Northeast Ohio Areawide
Coordinating Agency
External Affairs Committee Meeting**

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**Timothy J. Cosgrove
Partner, Squire Patton Boggs US LLP
timothy.cosgrove@squirepb.com**

Federal Transportation Team: Primary Points of Contact



Patricia Doersch
Partner
O +1 202 457 6029
M +1 703 855 0789
patricia.doersch@squirepb.com



Carolina Mederos
Principal
O +1 202 457 5653
M +1 202 744 5449
carolina.mederos@squirepb.com



Timothy J. Cosgrove
Partner
O +1 216 479 8562
M +1 216 406 0174
timothy.cosgrove@squirepb.com



Natasha Eckard Hammond
Public Policy Advisor
O +1 202 457 6317
M +1 202 213 6233
natasha.hammond@squirepb.com

2018 Opportunities for NOACA: Year of Infrastructure

- President Trump has made clear his main priority for 2018 is signing into law comprehensive infrastructure legislation.
- On Capitol Hill, there is strong interest from Members on both sides of the aisle to promote and advance comprehensive infrastructure legislation.
- House and Senate Committees are working on infrastructure legislation; Congress awaits Administration's proposal, which is anticipated in late January.
- FAST Act programs and funding levels are in place through FY 2020; however, a large infrastructure package will likely shape an early transportation reauthorization.
- This year's infrastructure proposal is viewed by many transportation stakeholders as the best opportunity to advance their particular interests; NOACA should seek to include its legislative priorities on such bill.
- The U.S. Chamber of Commerce has proposed a 25-cent-per-gallon increase to the Federal gas tax to help pay for an infrastructure bill.

2018 Opportunities for NOACA: Return of Earmarks?

- There have been recent, bipartisan calls from Members of Congress to resume the practice of earmarking project funding to their districts, beginning with the annual appropriations process and this year's infrastructure legislation.
- Northeast Ohio is well-represented on the House Appropriations Committee (Reps. Joyce, Kaptur), and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (Rep. Gibbs).
 - As NOACA maintains strong relationships with these Members, as well as the entire Northeast Ohio Congressional delegation, NOACA is well-positioned to submit programmatic requests, which could direct additional funds to projects in Northeast Ohio.
 - Programmatic requests through the annual appropriations process will begin in the spring; NOACA should begin to identify ideal projects for such requests.

NOACA's 2018 Federal Legislative Priorities

NOACA's number one priority in order to strengthen the MPO's local control of core transportation programs is to:

1. Increase Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program Suballocations to Northeast Ohio.

- Specifically, NOACA should seek to include in an infrastructure initiative a provision to increase suballocated funds from the STBG Program to urban areas served by MPOs that have asset management plans in place.

NOACA's second priority in order to fund critical projects in Northeast Ohio is to:

2. Secure funding for a Northeast Ohio project under US DOT's discretionary INFRA grant program.

- INFRA seeks to fund critical transportation projects across the U.S.
- In November, NOACA submitted two INFRA grant applications: Irishtown Bend and Cleveland Flats.

Increase STBG Funding to Northeast Ohio

Action Plan:

- SPB will draft legislative language to amend Section 133(d) of title 23, USC, to include not only a greater suballocation percentage, but also criteria targeted to NOACA's priorities (favoring MPOs with an asset management plan in place).
- SPB will provide the language to Senator Brown, Representative Gibbs, and Representative Fudge and work with them to ensure its inclusion in the original text of the expected comprehensive infrastructure bill, or as an amendment.
 - Senator Brown and Representative Fudge have specifically requested NOACA's proposals for a large infrastructure package.
- SPB will facilitate additional meetings with the Congressional delegation and key Senate and House Committee members to make the case for including NOACA's language as part of a comprehensive infrastructure proposal.
- SPB will lead efforts to engage outside trade associations and other supportive stakeholders.

Secure INFRA Grants for Key Regional Projects

- US DOT officials indicated INFRA grants will be awarded in late spring/early summer and conveyed the importance of Members of Congress personally contacting the Transportation Secretary to advocate for a particular project.

Action Plan:

- SPB will continue to lead efforts to build support on Capitol Hill for NOACA's two projects.
 - Specifically, we will continue to urge Members of the Northeast Ohio Congressional Delegation to weigh in directly with Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao.
 - Prior to the application deadline, NOACA officials traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with the Northeast Ohio Congressional Delegation and US DOT officials to advocate for both projects.
 - In every Congressional meeting, NOACA requested each Member reach out directly to Secretary Chao to specifically advocate for Irishtown Bend.

SPB's Overall Role in Translating NOACA's Federal Priorities into Success

- Develop NOACA's 2018 federal strategies and action items, tailoring NOACA's top priorities to Federal legislative and agency opportunities.
- Pursue ways to capitalize on Trump's infrastructure initiative, and work with the Trump Administration, Capitol Hill, and other stakeholders.
- Canvas all funding opportunities, specifically focusing on INFRA and TIGER discretionary grant programs.
- Act as Congressional, agency, and industry group liaison and advocate for NOACA, e.g., comprehensive advocacy push for INFRA grant applications.
- Pursue additional Federal funding to Northeast Ohio projects through programmatic requests.
- Keep NOACA informed of, and provide comprehensive coverage of, transportation-related events, actions and opportunities in Washington, such as Congressional hearings, DOT grant notices, and stakeholder meetings.

Questions?

Thank you!