

THE FIRST WORD

May, 2015

LEGISLATIVE ALERT!!!!!!

Transportation Funding Targeted Due To Budget Issues Immediate Action Necessary

With the Legislative Session in the final months, all action at the Capitol has turned to developing the 2016 State Budget. Facing a \$600+ Million shortfall, Legislative leaders are looking to many different sources to make up the deficit, ranging from across-the-board cuts in agency budgets to raiding so-called "surpluses" in existing revolving funds. Since the beginning of the session, ACEC OKLAHOMA and other transportation groups have been on-guard against a raid on the ROADS fund, which would have a devastating effect on ODOT's 8-Year Plan.

As things have ramped up the past few days, it looks like Legislative leaders are not looking toward the ROADS fund, although ODOT may take a reduction in their general appropriations/operations budget.

HOWEVER, the target now seems to be focused on the counties and the CIRB (County Improvements for Roads and Bridges) Fund!

As we understand the situation, the CIRB Fund receives money from vehicle registration fees, which is then used to fund the County 5-Year Plan. When originally set-up, a target of \$120 Million annually was set for this fund. For the coming year, the \$120 Million fund balance will be exceeded to somewhere in the \$135 Million range.

Now, here's the rub.....there are two "competing" proposals in the House and Senate. In the Senate, there is a move to reduce the CIRB from the \$135 million estimate to just \$75 million which would be devastating to the County 5-Year Plan! In the House, there is discussion of "capping" the CIRB at \$120 million, and transferring the "excess" to the General Fund.

We have seen estimates that "capping" the CIRB Fund at \$120 million could cause the loss of some 220 county bridge replacement projects. The Senate plan would have an even

bigger impact, with the loss of some 550 bridge projects. Both reductions would increase the number of road/bridge closures, having a direct negative impact on the travelling public.

In discussions with our transportation partners, we understand that the counties "may" be agreeable to the cap at \$120 million, while asking for a 3-year "sunset" on the cap.

ACEC OKLAHOMA priorities are as follows:

Keeping with our long-standing position that funds generated through user-fees (gas tax, registration fees, etc.) should only be used for transportation,

#1. Hold the ROADS Fund "harmless"...i.e., **ABSOLUTELY NO REDUCTION** in the general fund transfer to the ROADS fund! "Fall on the sword" to protect the ROADS Fund!!!

#2. Minimize reductions in ODOT's general appropriation/operations budget.

#3. Hold the CIRB Fund "harmless" unless an agreement with the county's can be reached which minimizes the overall impact and provides for a "catch up" at a later date.

Time is growing short as Legislative Leaders are looking for a mid-May adjournment, some two week prior to the Constitutionally required adjournment date.

CALL OR E-MAIL YOUR SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES TODAY!!!!!! Follow this link, enter your address/city, and scroll down to see contact info for your State Senator and State Representative:

<http://www.okhouse.gov/FindMyLegislator.aspx>



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ACEC OKLAHOMA Meets With Oklahoma Congressional Delegation During ACEC Convention

During the recently concluded ACEC Annual Convention in Washington, representatives of ACEC OKLAHOMA spent time on Capitol Hill meeting with the Oklahoma Congressional Delegation.

ACEC OKLAHOMA's delegation was led by Chairman-Elect Brent Schniers, and included ACEC National Director Steve Ford; three Past Chairmans, Stacy Loeffler, Alan Soltani, and Mike Homan; and, President/CEO Jim Sullins.

The group was honored to have personal meetings with Senator Jim Inhofe, who was also the keynote speaker on the second day of the Convention, as well as Senator James Lankford, Congressmen Steve Russell, and Congressman MarkWayne Mullin. Additionally, the ACEC OKLAHOMA group met with key staff at the offices of Congressmen Lucas, Cole, and Bridenstine.

In addition to the visits on the Hill, the ACEC Delegation participated in a variety of ACEC governance meetings and educational programs.

As the ACEC Board of Directors meeting was held the morning of 20th Anniversary of the Murrah Building bombing, ACEC OKLAHOMA President Jim Sullins was given the opportunity to address the national Board in honor and remembrance of the 169 individual who perished on the morning of April 19, 1995.



Oklahoma Delegation with Senator Inhofe



Oklahoma Delegation with Senator Lankford



Oklahoma Delegation with Congressman Russell



Senator Inhofe Addresses ACEC Convention



Sullins Addresses ACEC Board of Directors



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President's Report

May, 2015

David Raymond, ACEC President

Great to see you all at last month's convention in Washington, D.C. – where we had a record turnout of 1,400. Our “citizen lobbyists” rallied to promote infrastructure investment, tax reform, and other key priorities. Senator James Inhofe (R-OK), Chair of the Environment and Public Works Committee, complimented ACEC on its “influence” with Congress; and General Stanley McChrystal (ret.), CNN's Jake Tapper and other speakers covered a full range of political and management issues.

We thank ACEC's outgoing Chair Dick Wells and his Executive Committee members for their wonderful service to the Council in 2014-15; and welcome incoming Chair Ralph Christie and his new ExCom for 2015-16 as they go to work on the issues that matter most to us.

Also, many thanks and best wishes to retiring Executive Directors Candy Toler of ACEC/Tennessee and Stephanie Morse of ACEC/Indiana for their many years of outstanding service to their states and to the Council.

General

- Record 1,400 attendees at the ACEC Annual Convention in Washington, D.C. lobbied on Capitol Hill for MAP-21 reauthorization, expansion of energy markets, and balanced tax reform; and participated in a wide range of business education and market-oriented activities.
- Convention attendees heard prominent speakers including General Stanley McChrystal (ret.), CNN's Jake Tapper, Deputy Secretary of Transportation Victor Mendez, Rear Admiral and head of NAVFAC Kate Gregory, and many others from the public and private sectors.
- ACEC's Board of Directors voted to maintain the current momentum of the Minuteman Fund war chest to support critical state legal and legislative efforts; updated the membership recruitment strategic goal; clarified the definition of a “member” for dues calculation and purposes; and established a dues cap at 5,000 employees.
- The Engineering Excellence Awards Gala – recognizing the finest engineering achievements of the year – honored 170 projects.
- and offered words of encouragement to ACEC members prior to their visits to Capitol Hill.
- The FY 2016 budget resolution conference includes language to accommodate increased transportation infrastructure funding in MAP-21 reauthorization.
- Teamed with other business organizations on a letter urging Congress to protect the cash method of accounting.
- Submitted comments on the Council's tax reform priorities to the Senate Finance Committee tax reform working groups.
- Recommended greater flexibility for prospective engineering, surveying, and inspection applications for unmanned aircraft systems, in comments submitted on draft FAA regulations.
- Representative Sam Graves (R-MO) introduced the ACEC-backed *Design-Build Efficiency and Jobs Act of 2015*, which would limit the use of one-step design-build in both military and civilian construction and streamline the two-step process to focus on the most qualified teams in the second phase of the competition.

Government Advocacy

- Hundreds of ACEC members converged on Capitol Hill during the Convention to make a strong case for infrastructure investment, tax reform, and other key priorities.
- Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman James Inhofe (R-OK) briefed Convention attendees on the status of MAP-21 reauthorization
- Senator David Vitter (R-LA) and Rep. Mick Mulvaney (R-SC) introduced ACEC-backed bills to prevent federal agencies from requiring that contractors sign project labor agreements (PLAs) as a condition of winning federal construction contracts.
- ACEC/PAC has already raised \$400,000 toward this year's \$1 million target.



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