

January 29, 2007

Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

RE: Comments in the matter of NPRM for Projects of National and Regional Significance Evaluation and Rating – Proposed Changes to 23 CFR Part 505; Docket No. FHWA-05-23393

On behalf of the Waterfront Coalition, I would like to express our support for this rule outlining the Projects of Regional and National Significance. By way of background, the Waterfront Coalition represents the users of the nation's intermodal freight transportation network comprising roads, rail and blue-water port facilities. It has been the concern of Waterfront Coalition members that this intermodal network cannot efficiently support the continued growth in international commerce. Many shippers already experience increasing costs associated with freight bottlenecks at rail yards, marine port facilities and along segments of the national highway system. We believe that this program can greatly help maintain and expand these intermodal freight bottlenecks needed to reduce congestion costs on businesses moving international commerce.

The Waterfront Coalition commends the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Department of Transportation for establishing rules for this new program even though all funds appropriated in the current authorization have been completely allocated to projects specified in SAFETEA-LU. We believe that these proposed changes in this rule will allow FHWA to develop the program as an integral mechanism to improve federal funding for important freight projects in preparation for the next surface transportation reauthorization bill as well as subsequent reauthorizations.

Specifically, we endorse the concept of prioritizing funding for projects seeking federal support under this program. This prioritization enables FHWA and the Department of Transportation to channel limited federal funding to those projects that demonstrate the greatest benefit to the national economy.

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions at (202) 861-0825

Sincerely,

Robin Lanier
Executive Director