

priorities related to congestion reduction.

Transportation system congestion is one of the single largest threats to U.S. economic prosperity and the American way of life. In response to the challenges of congestion, in May 2006, the DOT established the National Strategy to Reduce Congestion on America's Transportation Network (the "Congestion Initiative").¹ The Congestion Initiative is a bold and comprehensive national program to reduce congestion on the Nation's roads, rails, runways and waterways.

Traffic congestion affects virtually every aspect of peoples' lives—where people live, where they work, where they shop, and how much they pay for goods and services. According to 2005 figures, in certain metropolitan areas the average rush hour driver loses as many as 72 hours per year to travel delay—equivalent to almost 2 weeks of work, amounting annually to a virtual "congestion tax" as high as \$1,374 per traveler in wasted time and fuel.² Nationwide, congestion imposes costs on the economy of over \$78 billion per year,³ more than a five-fold increase since 1982, and that would be even higher if it accounted for the significant cost of unreliability to drivers and businesses, the environmental impacts of idle related auto emissions, or increased gasoline prices.

The STEP directly addresses congestion reduction efforts as part of the Planning Focus Area. Other STEP emphasis areas include goals and objectives that relate to congestion reduction. These include: Congestion; Air Quality and Global Climate Change; Bicycle/Pedestrian and Health, Environmental Streamlining/Stewardship; United States/Canada and United States/Mexico Border Planning; Safety Planning; Freight Planning; Travel Modeling, etc. In addition, the STEP outreach efforts continue to seek partnerships that can leverage limited research funding with other

stakeholders and partners in order to increase the total amount of funding available to meet the Nation's surface transportation research needs including congestion reduction.

SAFETEA-LU provides \$16.875 million per year for FY 2006–2009 to implement this new cooperative research program. Due to obligation limitations, rescissions, and congressional designation of Title V Research in SAFETEA-LU, it is anticipated that approximately \$12 million of the \$16.875 million authorized will be available each fiscal year.

The FHWA is issuing this notice to: (1) to announce revisions to the STEP Implementation Strategy for the FY 2009 STEP, and (2) to solicit comments via the STEP Web site on proposed research activities to be undertaken in the FY 2009 STEP. The STEP Implementation Strategy was revised to: Update information on the graph and chart regarding historical planning and environment research funding, and to add information about the proposed FY 2009 STEP including proposed funding levels, goals and potential research activities.

Suggested lines of research activities for the FY 2009 STEP may include potential research ideas related to highway safety and the Congestion Initiative. Research activities related to the Congestion Initiative could specifically include ideas to relieve urban congestion; improve analysis tools for measuring and analyzing environmental impacts of congestion management projects; enhance national data resources on operational and environmental effects of congestion management projects; unleash private sector investment resources; promote operational and technological improvements; and target major freight bottlenecks and expand freight policy outreach.

We invite the public to visit this Web site to obtain additional information on the STEP, as well as information on the process for forwarding comments to the FHWA regarding the STEP implementation plan. The URL for the STEP Web site is <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/hep/step/index.htm>. The FHWA will use this Web site as a major mechanism for informing the public regarding the status of the STEP.

Authority: Section 5207 of Pub. L. 109–59.

Issued on: June 11, 2008.

James D. Ray,

Acting Federal Highway Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Transit Administration

[FTA Docket No. FTA–2008–0034]

Notice of Request for the Extension of a Currently Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: Federal Transit Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, this notice announces the intention of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to request the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to extend the following currently approved information collection: 49 U.S.C. Section 5330—Rail Fixed Guideway Systems, State Safety Oversight.

DATES: Comments must be submitted before August 22, 2008.

ADDRESSES: To ensure that your comments are not entered more than once into the docket, submit comments identified by the docket number by only one of the following methods:

1. *Web site:* www.regulations.gov. Follow the instructions for submitting comments on the U.S. Government electronic docket site. (**Note:** The U.S. Department of Transportation's (DOT's) electronic docket is no longer accepting electronic comments.) All electronic submissions must be made to the U.S. Government electronic docket site at www.regulations.gov. Commenters should follow the directions below for mailed and hand-delivered comments.

2. *Fax:* 202–366–7951.

3. *Mail:* U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Docket Operations, M–30, West Building, Ground Floor, Room W12–140, Washington, DC 20590–0001.

4. *Hand Delivery:* U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Docket Operations, M–30, West Building, Ground Floor, Room W12–140, Washington, DC 20590–0001 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except federal holidays.

Instructions: You must include the agency name and docket number for this notice at the beginning of your comments. Submit two copies of your comments if you submit them by mail. For confirmation that FTA has received your comments, include a self-addressed stamped postcard. Note that all comments received, including any personal information, will be posted and will be available to Internet users, without change, to www.regulations.gov. You may review DOT's complete

¹ Speaking before the National Retail Federation's annual conference on May 16, 2006, in Washington, DC, former U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta unveiled a new plan to reduce congestion plaguing America's roads, rails, and airports. The National Strategy to Reduce Congestion on America's Transportation Network includes a number of initiatives designed to reduce transportation congestion. The transcript of these remarks is available at: <http://www.dot.gov/affairs/minetasp051606.htm>. Additional information may be located at: <http://www.fightgridlocknow.gov>.

² Texas Transportation Institute (TTI), 2007 Urban Mobility Report, September 2007 (http://tti.tamu.edu/documents/mobility_report_2007_wappx.pdf, Table 1; and http://mobility.tamu.edu/ums/congestion_data/tables/los_angeles.pdf), Tables 1 and 2.

³ TTI, 2007 Urban Mobility Report, p. 1.

Privacy Act Statement in the **Federal Register** published April 11, 2000 (65 FR 19477), or you may visit www.regulations.gov. Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents and comments received, go to www.regulations.gov at any time. Background documents and comments received may also be viewed at the U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Docket Operations, M-30, West Building, Ground Floor, Room W12-140, Washington, DC 20590-0001 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except federal holidays.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Levern McElveen, Safety Team Leader, Office of Safety and Security, (202) 366-1651, or e-mail: Levern.McElveen@dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Interested parties are invited to send comments regarding any aspect of this information collection, including: (1) The necessity and utility of the information collection for the proper performance of the functions of the FTA; (2) the accuracy of the estimated burden; (3) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the collected information; and (4) ways to minimize the collection burden without reducing the quality of the collected information. Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection.

Title: 49 U.S.C. Section 5330—Rail Fixed Guideway Systems, State Safety Oversight (OMB Number: 2132-0558).

Background: 49 U.S.C. Section 5330 requires States to designate a State Safety Oversight (SSO) agency to oversee the safety and security of each rail transit agency within the State's jurisdiction. To comply with Section 5330, SSO agencies must develop program standards which meet FTA's minimum requirements. In the Program Standard, which must be approved by FTA, each SSO agency must require each rail transit agency in the State's jurisdiction to prepare and implement a System Safety Program Plan (SSPP) and System Security Plan (SSP). The SSO agency also requires the rail transit agencies in its jurisdiction to conduct specific activities, such as accident investigation, implementation of a hazard management program, and the management of an internal safety and security audit process. SSO agencies review and approve the SSPPs and SSPs of the rail transit agencies. Once every three years, States conduct an on-site review of the rail transit agencies in their jurisdictions to assess SSPP/SSP

implementation and to determine whether these plans are effective and if they need to be updated. SSO agencies develop final reports documenting the findings from these on-site reviews and require corrective actions. SSO agencies also review and approve accident investigation reports, participate in the rail transit agency's hazard management program, and oversee implementation of the rail transit agency's internal safety and security audit process. SSO agencies review and approve corrective action plans and track and monitor rail transit agency activities to implement them.

Collection of this information enables each SSO agency to monitor each rail transit agency's implementation of the State's requirements as specified in the Program Standard approved by FTA. Without this information, States would not be able to oversee the rail transit agencies in their jurisdictions. Recent recommendations from the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and the Government Accountability Office (GAO) have encouraged States and rail transit agencies to devote additional resources to these safety activities and safety oversight in general.

SSO agencies also submit an annual certification to FTA that the State is in compliance with Section 5330 and an annual report documenting the State's safety and security oversight activities. FTA uses the annual information submitted by the States to monitor implementation of the program. If a State fails to comply with Section 5330, FTA may withhold up to five percent of the funds appropriated for use in a State or urbanized area in the State under section 5307. The information submitted by the States ensures FTA's compliance with applicable federal laws, OMB Circular A-102, and 49 CFR Part 18, "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements with State and Local Governments."

Respondents: State and local government agencies.

Estimated Annual Burden on Respondents: Annually, each designated SSO agency devotes approximately 767 hours to information collection activities for each of the rail transit agencies in the State's jurisdiction. Combined, the SSO agencies spend approximately 33,770 hours on information collection activities each year, or roughly half of the total level of effort devoted to implement Section 5330 requirements in a given year. The local governments affected by Section 5330, including the rail transit agencies, spend an annual total of 108,623 hours on information collection activities to

support implementation of Section 5330, or approximately 2,469 hours each. This amount also equals approximately half of the total level of effort devoted to implement Section 5330 requirements in a given year.

Estimated Total Annual Burden:

142,393 hours.

Frequency: Annual.

Issued: June 16, 2008.

Ann M. Linnertz,

Associate Administrator for Administration.

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration

[Docket No. PHMSA-2007-28505]

Pipeline Safety: Requests for Special Permit

AGENCY: Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA); DOT.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Federal pipeline safety laws allow a pipeline operator to request PHMSA to waive compliance with any part of the Federal pipeline safety regulations by granting a special permit to the operator. PHMSA is publishing this notice to provide a list of special permit requests we have received from pipeline operators seeking relief from compliance with certain pipeline safety regulations. This notice seeks public comment on these requests, including comments on any environmental impacts. At the conclusion of the comment period, PHMSA will evaluate each request individually to determine whether to grant or deny a special permit.

DATES: Submit any comments regarding any of these special permit requests by July 23, 2008.

ADDRESSES: Comments should reference the docket number for the special permit request and may be submitted in the following ways:

- **E-Gov Web Site:** <http://www.Regulations.gov>. This site allows the public to enter comments on any **Federal Register** notice issued by any agency.
- **Fax:** 1-202-493-2251.
- **Mail:** Docket Management System: U.S. Department of Transportation, Docket Operations, M-30, West Building Ground Floor, Room W12-140, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Washington, DC 20590.
- **Hand Delivery:** DOT Docket Management System; U.S. Department