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ASSOCIATION  
OF TOWNS  
AND TOWNSHIPS**

## **Transportation Priorities in the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress**

### **Ensure Federal Transportation Funds Flow to Towns and Townships**

#### **NATaT Supports Increasing Access to the Federal Off-System Bridge Program**

NATaT supports the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT's) Off-System Bridge program, which funds state and local bridges that are not on the Federal-aid Highway system. However, many of the nation's "bridges" that need repair and replacement are not eligible because they do not meet the federal definition of a bridge. Federal regulations define a bridge as a structure having a span greater than 20 feet (23 CFR 661.17(a)(1)). NATaT supports a carve-out of the off-system bridge program to include structures that are 10 to 20 feet, which states must distribute through a competitive process.

#### **NATaT Supports a Realistic Definition of "Rural"**

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law created many opportunities for local governments to secure federal assistance to shore up failing infrastructure, including infrastructure in smaller, more rural communities. However, many of the programs – transportation and otherwise – have different definitions of "rural." For example, the Federal Highway Administration's Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program and the Rebuilding America's Infrastructure Sustainably and Equitably (RAISE) Grant Program define rural as "Located outside of a U.S. Census-designated urbanized area with a population of 200,000 or more." The Federal Transit Administration's Bus and Bus Facilities Grant program and the Federal Railroad Administration's Railroad Crossing Elimination Grant program define rural as "Located outside of a U.S. Census-designated urbanized area (<50,000)." The majority of towns and townships in this country have a population of 5,000 or less. If the federal government wants to ensure needed funds are getting to all areas of the country – urban and rural and anywhere in between – a more realistic definition of rural is necessary.

NATaT supports the Rebuilding Rural Roads Act (H.R. 3002) that reduces the population definition of rural area in the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program from 200,000 to 20,000. This bill would level the playing field for rural America to access competitive grant funds by making sure the eligibility requirements accurately represent rural communities.

# Keep Heavier, Larger Trucks Off Our Roadways

## NATaT Opposes the SHIP IT Act (H.R. 471)

The current weight limit for trucks operating on the federal highway system is 80,000 pounds. The SHIP IT Act would create a nationwide “pilot” program to increase the national truck weight limit to 91,000 pounds or higher. The measure would also create an unlimited weight limit for battery powered trucks. NATaT opposes this effort as larger, heavier trucks imperil road safety and severely impact our already weakening infrastructure, especially on local roads and bridges where these vehicles ultimately travel.

## Funding the Highway Trust Fund

### NATaT Cautions Against VMT

As federal receipts into the Highway Trust Fund continue to decline, federal policymakers are considering ways to fund the national transportation system. One mechanism is a “vehicle miles traveled” (VMT) fee. NATaT is concerned that a VMT fee would impact rural drivers disproportionately higher than others. Studies have shown that a per-mile VMT fee of between five cents and 25 cents would increase the daily work trip costs for low-income rural residents between \$2.80 and \$14 per day. NATaT wants to ensure that any effort to impose VMT fees considers the limited transportation options for rural residents and the resulting need to use their vehicles to access work and daily services.