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NEWS RELEASE

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**Association Stakeholders Call for National Freight Program
and Stronger Federal Role**

The Freight Stakeholders Coalition, a longstanding group of the country's largest shippers and public and private transportation providers, has released its 2009 Surface Transportation Reauthorization Platform (attached). The Coalition's 17-member organizations represent America's diverse freight community and believe it is vital for the Federal government to provide a strong leadership role during the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization process.

Cornerstones of the Stakeholders' ten-point platform are the promotion of freight mobility under a comprehensive national freight program and adequate infrastructure investment for projects of regional and national significance to accommodate the doubling of cargo that is forecasted to take place over the next 20 years. Following are statements of support for the platform from a cross-section of the Coalition's diverse membership:

"The businesses, large and small, represented by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce understand how critical it is to maintain, modernize and expand the nation's freight transportation system. Economic recovery and long-term growth are supported by reliable and safe networks that are operated efficiently. Freight may not vote, but members of our organizations do, so Congress and the Obama Administration must make moving the commerce a central focus of any transportation-related legislation." **Janet F. Kavinoky, Director of Transportation Infrastructure, U.S. Chamber of Commerce.**

"The number and significance of the many organizations unified around this platform is a testament to the importance and urgency of establishing a freight program with dedicated funding in the next surface authorization bill. A vote for a dedicated freight program and fund is a vote for the future of American commerce and competitiveness." **Leslie Blakey, Executive Director, Coalition for America's Gateways and Trade Corridors.**

"The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) is pleased to join the other industry and government members of the Freight Stakeholders Coalition in support of a platform of proposals to make much-needed investment in the nation's freight transportation infrastructure. The strength of the American economy depends on the ability to efficiently move products domestically and globally with all modes of transportation. AASHTO believes, with the other Stakeholders, that the starting point is the development of a National Multimodal Strategic Plan and that the U.S. DOT must establish a multi-modal freight office within the Office of the Secretary to provide coherence, direction and impetus to the federal freight program." **John Horsley, Executive Director, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials.**

“Investing in infrastructure provides lasting economic benefits that create jobs and support economic development and growth. Our nation’s vast interconnected network of roads, railways, airports, inland waterways, and seaports support and supply every sector of the economy. We need a dedicated and well-coordinated effort that will help sustain future growth and meet the competitive demands facing manufacturers today by modernizing and expanding the nation’s surface transportation system.” **Robyn Boerstling, Director, Transportation and Infrastructure Policy, National Association of Manufacturers.**

“Recognizing that the U.S. DOT projects demand for freight to double over the next few decades, it is imperative to address our critical surface transportation infrastructure needs starting now. The Freight Stakeholders Coalition principles lay the foundation for an efficient freight transportation system that helps keep America moving forward.” **Edward R. Hamberger, President and CEO, Association of American Railroads**

“We join today with the freight industry in support of increased freight capacity. We believe that a stand-alone freight program at the national level that empowers states, regions and communities alike to plan for, build and maintain critical freight infrastructure to a greater degree is critical. We also fully support the suballocation of authority and funding to the regional and local levels to ensure both the federal goals and objectives, along with the needs of our communities, are met through the inclusion of new or current freight programs. The critical decisions necessary, as well as a majority of the impact, to the current explosion of goods movement across the country are actualized locally – in connections to freight terminals, in the safety of our citizens, and in direct economic opportunities.” **Fred Abousleman, Executive Director, National Association of Regional Councils.**

"Addressing goods movement challenges and alleviating freight congestion must be a top priority in the upcoming surface transportation legislation in order to help ensure U.S. farmers, manufacturers and other businesses remain competitive in the global marketplace. Seaports can play a critical role in our national economic recovery, however, connecting infrastructure to ports requires higher levels of federal investment to create jobs, alleviate congestion and deliver prosperity." **Kurt J. Nagle, President and CEO, American Association of Port Authorities.**

“America’s freight transportation system is in dire need of increased and sustained investment. Without a strong commitment from Congress in the upcoming reauthorization cycle, productivity of all modes could deteriorate, which in turn will impact our country’s economic recovery and international competitiveness.” **Joni Casey, President and CEO, Intermodal Association of North America.**

“A national freight policy that streamlines the movement of goods, services and people is not only good transportation policy, but it’s good environmental and economic policy as well.” **Kelly Kolb, Vice President of Global Supply Chain Policy, Retail Industry Leaders Association.**

“What is needed is a national freight policy with the objective for goods to flow seamlessly and efficiently between the land and maritime systems of transport. Marine terminals are the nexus for that flow whether for international or domestic goods movement.” **Chuck Carroll, Executive Director of the National Association of Waterfront Employers.**

FREIGHT STAKEHOLDERS COALITION

2009 Surface Transportation Reauthorization Platform

The Freight Stakeholders Coalition represents shippers and public and private transportation providers working together to support policies to promote freight mobility in the United States. The Coalition believes that the next surface transportation authorization bill must maintain a strong federal role and provide for the creation of a national freight program.

We are unified in our conviction that substantial investment in the nation's freight transportation system must be given a high priority in the next authorization. Without such investment, the performance of all modes of goods movement will continue to deteriorate and our country will pay a high price in terms of domestic prosperity and international competitiveness.

The Federal government must continue to play a strong and focused role in shaping the future of our nation's surface transportation policy. The federal government should lead in furthering America's competitive advantage by developing projects of regional and national significance which reduce congestion, enhance goods movement, improve the environment, and create and maintain jobs. In addition, freight mobility should be a key factor in any performance standards established by Congress or the Department of Transportation.

We are committed to working together, with the Congress, the Administration and other important interests, to develop the public-private consensus necessary to develop a freight transportation policy and program that will meet the needs of the nation.

The Freight Stakeholders Coalition has agreed to the following principles for the upcoming surface transportation authorization legislation:

1. Mandate the development of a National Multimodal Freight Strategic Plan. The next surface transportation authorization should mandate the development of a National Multimodal Freight Strategic Plan. The development of this plan should be led by the

U.S. Department of Transportation, in partnership with state DOTs, cities, counties, MPOS and regional planning organizations, ports, freight shippers, freight carriers, and other stakeholders.

2. Provide dedicated funds for freight mobility/goods movement. The legislation should provide dedicated funds for freight mobility/goods movement. Dedicated funds should be provided to support capital investment in critical freight transportation infrastructure to produce major public benefits including higher productivity, enhanced global competitiveness and a higher standard of living for our nation. High priority should be given to investment in efficient goods movement on the most significant freight corridors, including investment in intermodal connectors into freight terminals and projects that support national and regional connectivity.

3. Authorize a state-administered freight transportation program. Congress should authorize a state-administered freight transportation program as a new core element of the federal highway program apportioned to states.

4. If a new freight trust fund is created, it should be firewalled, with the funds fully spent on projects that facilitate freight transportation and not used for any other purpose. Priority should be given to nationally and regionally significant infrastructure, with funds distributed through a competitive grant process using objective, merit-based criteria. Appropriate projects that are freight-related should still be eligible to compete for other federal funding sources.

5. Establish a multi-modal freight office within the Office of the Secretary. Freight mobility should be a key priority within USDOT. The Secretary's office should have staff with freight expertise who can focus on nationally and regionally significant infrastructure.

6. Form a national freight industry advisory group pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act to provide industry input to USDOT, working in conjunction with the new multi-modal freight office. The advisory group should be funded and staffed, and it should consist of freight transportation providers from all modes as well as shippers and state and local planning organizations. Despite the best efforts of the agency to function as "One DOT," there is still not enough of a focused voice for freight. An Advisory Group would meet the need for regular and professional interaction between USDOT and the diverse freight industry, and could help identify critical freight chokepoints in the national freight transportation system.

7. Fund multi-state freight corridor planning organizations. Given that goods often move across state lines and involve multiple modes of transportation, Congress should fund multi-state, multi-modal planning organizations that will make it possible to plan and invest in projects where costs are concentrated in a single state but benefits are distributed among multiple states.

8. Build on the success of existing freight programs. There are numerous existing transportation programs that facilitate freight mobility and are demonstrably valuable. A new national freight policy should continue and strengthen these core programs or build

on their principles and successes to guide freight program development if DOT is restructured and/or program areas are consolidated.

Examples of these successful core freight programs are the Projects of Regional and National Significance, National Corridor Infrastructure Improvement Program; Freight Planning Capacity Building Program; Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, National Cooperative Freight Transportation Research Program; Coordinated Border Infrastructure Program; Private Activity Bonds for Intermodal Facilities; Capital Grants for Rail Line Relocation Projects; Rail Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF); Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Program, Truck Parking Pilot Program, and Rail-Highway Crossings. Funding for discretionary programs should be awarded through a competitive grant process.

9. Expand freight planning expertise at the state and local levels. Given the importance of freight mobility to the national economy, States and MPOs should be provided additional funds for expert staff positions dedicated to freight issues (commensurate to the volumes of freight moving in and through their areas). All states should have a freight plan as a tool for planning investments and for linking to the national freight system.

10. Foster operational and environmental efficiencies in goods movement. As in other aspects of transportation, improvements designed to achieve long term sustainability in goods movement are desirable to meet both commercial objectives—economy and efficiency—and public objectives—energy security and reduced environmental impact. Federal policy should employ positive approaches to enhance freight system efficiency and throughput with the goal of reducing energy consumption and green house gas emissions.

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