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| **President Obama Signs Surface Transportation Bill Into Law - America Fast Forward Is Key Part Of Bill**  This afternoon, President Obama signed into law Moving Ahead For Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), the surface transportation bill adopted by Congress last week.  Joining the President at the signing ceremony was Los Angeles Mayor and Metro Director Antonio Villaraigosa, who has strongly advocated support for the America Fast Forward initiative.  The legislation signed into law today includes an innovative finance section entitled America Fast Forward that includes $1.7 billion in lending authority through the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program ($750 million in Fiscal Year 2013 and $1 billion in Fiscal Year 2014). In addition, the TIFIA program is substantially reformed in ways that reflect our agency's America Fast Forward initiative. The conference report shares that the America Fast Forward program will "help communities leverage their transportation resources and stretch Federal dollars further than they have been stretched before." The America Fast Forward initiative was endorsed by our Board of Directors. MAP-21 keeps funding for federal highway programs at current levels with a small inflationary adjustment. In addition, the bill includes language that will serve to streamline the federal New Starts program, which has been an issue advanced by our agency with Members of Congress and the Federal Transit Administration. The bill also provides for expenditure authority through September 30, 2014, after which time Congress will need to adopt a new surface transportation bill or extend MAP-21.  Today, I was in Washington, DC for a series of meetings with the offices of U.S. Representatives Judy Chu (D-32), Adam Schiff (D-29), Linda Sanchez (D39) and Karen Bass (D-33). I also met today with Federal Transit Administration Administrator Peter Rogoff and Deputy Administrator Therese McMillan to discuss issues of mutual concern. Following my meeting with the FTA Administrator, I was honored to attend the White House signing ceremony for the surface transportation bill. |
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