

ABA Position Paper

Dedicated Funding for Intermodal Transportation Facilities

Issue

Federal funding is needed to create a network of intermodal passenger facilities that will provide seamless intercity and local public transportation. Intercity bus projects should be included in those intermodal facilities to better integrate intercity bus service into the intermodal chain.

Background

The nation's surface public transportation system comprises four different modes – motorcoaches, intercity rail, urban mass transit and rural local transit. To be truly effective alternatives to the private automobile, these modes must be linked to each other and to airports at intermodal transfer facilities that provide seamless transportation for the traveling public.

Today, there are perhaps 130-150 true intermodal passenger terminals in the country, although few bring together all modes. Yet, there is a critical need for connections between local transit and intercity services, and between rural transit and intercity bus services, with through connections to intercity rail and air services not available locally. Moreover, buses picking up charter or tour groups arriving by airplane or rail need parking facilities at those terminals. And people in suburban areas need park and ride facilities for convenient access to public transportation.

Two provisions of SAFETEA-LU increased the eligibility of intercity bus to be included as part of intermodal facilities developed with Federal Transit Administration (FTA) capital funding. The first provision, contained in Section 3004 defines capital projects eligible for FTA funding to include intercity bus terminals that are related physically or functionally to public transportation facilities. The second provision contained in Section 3011 sets aside \$35 million annually from the FTA Capital Investment Grants bus discretionary program.

ABA Position

SAFETEA-LU provisions increasing federal funding eligibility for intercity bus projects as part of intermodal facilities should be fully implemented in accordance with Congressional intention and direction. With regard to the 35 million dollar set-aside in SAFETEA-LU, FTA may not be able to accomplish this because the entire FTA bus fund has been earmarked, but FTA should require that SAFETEA-LU funded intermodal terminal projects must include intercity buses to the maximum extent possible.

(November 2006)