



Central Arizona Governments
Central Yavapai Metro. Planning Org.
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MetroPlan Greater Flagstaff
Northern Arizona Council of Gov'ts.
Sierra Vista Metro. Planning Org.
Southeastern AZ Governments Org.
Sun Corridor Metro. Planning Org.
Western Arizona Council of Gov'ts.
Yuma Metropolitan Planning Org.

February 26, 2024

The Honorable Katie Hobbs &
The Honorable Members of the 56th Arizona State Legislature
1700 W. Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Governor Hobbs & Members of the Legislature,

On behalf of the Rural Transportation Advocacy Council (RTAC), a coalition of all the counties, cities, towns and regional transportation planning organizations across Greater Arizona, I wish to express our support for a longer-term, "clean" continuation of the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) currently under consideration through HB2037 and SB1184.

ADOT faces significant challenges developing and implementing the state highway program and other transportation-related functions under the Department's stewardship. The recently released long range transportation plan projects a \$162 billion funding gap when comparing anticipated revenues to needs over the next 25 years. Existing interstates and highways are aging, requiring extensive maintenance and rehabilitation. For decades, Arizona continues to be one of the fastest growing states in the nation necessitating a considerable level of expansion in addition to those maintenance needs.

Arizona has done very little to modernize and increase transportation-dedicated revenue. State fuel taxes have not been adjusted in over 30 years. Due to the continually decreasing purchasing power of state-dedicated revenues, the funding of our highway program has become increasingly dependent and now dominated by federal dollars. In addition to all of the other programming challenges, ADOT must also comply with all of the complex and extensive federal requirements, many of which vary from program to program, in order to continue remaining eligible to use federal funding.

Developing and implementing the state highway program is challenging enough without piling on more mandates and restrictions. As far as duration, it makes little sense to schedule another ADOT "sunset" review before there has been reasonable time to implement any reforms directed from the recently conducted one. Responding to excessive review requirements takes time and resources away from what should be the Department's primary focus of developing and delivering the state's highway program.

For all of these reasons, we support legislation authorizing a longer-term (8 years) and "clean" continuation of the Department as currently provided by the introduced version of HB2037.

Respectfully,

Paul David
Chairman, Rural Transportation Advocacy Council
Supervisor, Graham County