FAST Act

*Fixing America’s Surface Transportation* (FAST) Act, a five-year, $305 billion surface transportation reauthorization bill, was signed into law by President Obama on December 4, following final passage by the U.S. House of Representatives by a vote of 359 to 65 and by the U.S. Senate by a vote of 83 to 16. The legislation includes a first-ever Innovation Title which will fund critical research and accelerate the adoption of technologies to address highway and vehicle safety, traffic congestion, mobility, infrastructure condition, and other current and future transportation challenges.

- **Bill Text** – [PDF](#)
- **Summary** – [PDF](#)
- **Joint Explanatory Statement** – [PDF](#)

20 FAST Act Provisions to encourage innovation and accelerate the research and deployment of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) include:

1. $100 million per year for **Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) research**, with an expanded role to enhance the **national freight system** and assist in developing **cybersecurity standards** to help prevent hacking, spoofing, and disruption of connected and automated transportation vehicles. In the joint explanatory statement, the conferees state their belief that “federal, state, and local agencies must be prepared for the future growth and adoption of innovative technologies such as autonomous vehicles and that the ITS program should support research initiatives that are engaged in the research, development, testing, and validation of autonomous vehicle technologies.”

2. Creation of a new $60 million per year **Advanced Transportation and Congestion Management Technologies Deployment Program** to provide competitive grants to develop model deployment sites for large scale installation and operation of advanced transportation technologies to improve safety, efficiency, system performance, and infrastructure return on investment.

   Between 5 – 10 grants per year will be awarded to deploy advanced traveler information systems; advanced transportation management technologies; infrastructure maintenance, monitoring, and condition assessment; advanced public transportation systems; system performance data collection, analysis, and dissemination; advanced safety systems including vehicle-to-vehicle (V2V) and vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) communication, technologies associated with autonomous vehicles, and other collision avoidance technologies; integration of ITS with the Smart Grid and other energy distribution and charging systems; electronic pricing and payment systems; or advanced mobility and access technologies, such as dynamic ridesharing and information systems to support human services for elderly and disabled individuals.

3. $67.5 million per year for a **Technology and Innovation Deployment Program** designed to accelerate the deployment of new technology and innovations and analyze Federal, State, and local cost savings, project delivery time improvements, reduced fatalities, and congestion impacts.

4. $15 – 20 million per year to establish a **Surface Transportation System Funding Alternatives Program** to provide grants to states to demonstrate user-based alternative revenue mechanisms to maintain the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund.
5. **Funding eligibility for ITS projects** within core highway formula programs including the revised Surface Transportation Block Grant Program which specifies eligibility for infrastructure-based ITS capital improvements, operational improvements, capital and operating costs for traffic monitoring, management, and control facilities and programs, development and implementation of State asset management plans and performance-based management programs, highway and transit research and technology transfer programs, projects designed to support congestion pricing including electronic toll collection and travel demand management, and state offices to support eligible public private partnerships (PPP).

6. **Explicit funding eligibility for installation of V2I communication equipment** within all major highway formula programs including the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP), Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STP), Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP), and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement program.

7. Creation of a Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects competitive grant program funded at $4.5 billion over five years and a National Highway Freight program providing $6.3 billion in formula funding to states for projects including “intelligent transportation systems and other technology to improve the flow of freight, including intelligent freight transportation systems.” Other ITS projects specifically listed as being eligible for funding include real-time traffic, truck parking, roadway condition, and multimodal information systems; electronic screening and credentialing systems including weigh-in-motion truck inspection technologies; traffic signal optimization, including synchronized and adaptive signals; work zone management and information systems; highway ramp meters; electronic cargo and border security technologies; and ITS technologies that would increase truck freight efficiencies inside the boundaries of intermodal facilities. The bill also requires development of a multimodal freight policy which, among other goals, will use innovation and advance technology to improve the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the National Multimodal Freight Network.

8. An **Innovative Technology Deployment discretionary grant program to promote the deployment of ITS in commercial vehicle operations**, link Federal and State commercial vehicle information systems and networks, improve the safety and productivity of commercial vehicles and drivers, and reduce costs associated with commercial motor vehicle operations and regulations.

9. A **Beyond Compliance** initiative requiring the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to incorporate a methodology into the Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) program or establish a safety BASIC in the Safety Measurement System (SMS) to allow recognition for motor carriers that install advanced safety equipment, use enhanced driver fitness measures, adapt fleet safety management tools, technologies and programs, or satisfy other standards as determined by the Administrator.

10. Promulgation of a rule by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to require that information on **collision avoidance technologies** be indicated next to crashworthiness information on stickers placed on motor vehicles by their manufacturers.

11. $72.5 – $77.5 million per year for the **University Transportation Centers (UTC)** program, including selection of at least one Regional UTC focused on comprehensive transportation safety, congestion, connected vehicles, connected infrastructure, and autonomous vehicles.

12. A directive that **federal transportation research planning** be multimodal whenever possible and coordinated by the Secretary's office to prevent duplication of effort and identify opportunities to apply research across modes, which will include submission of **annual modal**
research plans, publication of a comprehensive database of U.S. DOT research projects, and development of a Transportation Research and Development 5-Year Strategic Plan to guide future research activities.

13. A Future Interstate Study to examine the actions needed to upgrade and restore the Dwight D. Eisenhower National System of Interstate and Defense Highways to its role as a premier system that meets the growing and shifting demands of the 21st century.

14. A Government Accountability Office assessment of autonomous transportation technology policy developed by public entities in the U.S., an assessment of the organizational readiness of U.S. DOT to address autonomous vehicle technology challenges including consumer privacy protections, and recommended implementation paths for autonomous technology, applications, and policies.

15. Traffic congestion research to accelerate the adoption of transportation management systems that allow traffic to flow in the safest and most efficient manner possible while alleviating current and future traffic congestion.

16. A Smart Cities Transportation Planning Study to examine how digital and information technologies, including shared mobility, data, transportation network companies, and on-demand transportation services, are being adopted by cities and used to influence transportation planning and investment. The study would provide best practices to plan for smart cities in which information and technology are used to improve city operations, grow the local economy, improve response in times of emergencies and natural disasters, and improve the lives of city residents.

17. Establishment of a Performance Management Data Support program to develop, use, and maintain data sets and data analysis tools to assist states and metropolitan planning organizations in carrying out performance management analyses, including collection and distribution of vehicle probe data; collection of household travel data; enhancement of existing data collection and analysis tools to accommodate performance measures, targets, and related data to better understand trip origin and destination, trip time, and mode; improved performance predictions and travel models; and evaluation of the effects of project investments on performance.

18. A reduced cost threshold of $10 million for ITS, rural, and transit-oriented development projects to qualify for Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) loan assistance.

19. Continuation of FHWA’s Every Day Counts initiative to work with States, local agencies, and industry stakeholders to identify and deploy proven innovative practices and products that accelerate innovation deployment, shorten the project delivery process, improve environmental sustainability, enhance roadway safety, and reduce congestion.

20. A Motorcyclist Advisory Council to coordinate with and advise the Federal Highway Administrator on infrastructure issues including barrier and road design, construction, and maintenance practices, and the architecture and implementation of ITS technologies.

Additional Resources

- Congressional Budget Office Analysis – PDF