

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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### Principal Areas of Focus

The Department of Transportation conducts research and uses existing science to improve decisionmaking tools to address climate change. USDOT supports research that 1) examines the potential impacts of climate variability and change on transportation infrastructure and services; 2) increases energy efficiency and reduces greenhouse gases; and 3) improves transportation greenhouse gas data and modeling. USDOT has many programs that have either direct or indirect climate benefits and is working to develop cross-modal strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



USDOT's Climate Change Center is the Department's focal point for information and technical expertise on climate change. The Center coordinates research, policies, and actions related to transportation and climate change with USDOT's component organizations. Supporting USDOT's core goals of safety, mobility, environmental stewardship, and security, the Center promotes comprehensive approaches to reduce greenhouse gases, to prepare for the potential impacts of climate change, and to develop necessary adaptations to transportation operations and infrastructure. The Center's three primary objectives are to:

- Promote cost-effective strategies that reduce greenhouse gas emissions while supporting improved transportation safety, mobility, and efficiency
- Foster strategies to avoid, mitigate, or adapt to the potential impacts of climate change on the transportation system
- Provide leadership to the transportation community and coordinate USDOT multi-modal activities on climate change.

The Center supports CCSP goals through these objectives. Specifically, the Center aims to inform CCSP Goal 4 by identifying and providing scientific inputs for evaluating adaptation options and CCSP Goal 5 by supporting adaptive management and planning for physical infrastructure sensitive to climate variability and change.

In addition to participating in the Center, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has independent programs to reduce greenhouse gases and support CCSP goals. FAA conducts research to support CCSP Goal 2, leveraging research with other U.S. Government agencies to reduce uncertainties surrounding aviation emissions and their effect on climate change. FAA research through the Partnership for Air Transportation Noise and Emissions Reduction (PARTNER) Center of Excellence addresses the impact of aircraft contrails on climate change. FAA also has a number of ongoing operational initiatives to reduce the amount of greenhouse gases produced by aviation, including improved air traffic management, reduced vertical separation minimums, and the voluntary airport low emissions program that assists in deploying low emissions technology to airport operations. FAA also lends technical expertise and data to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

# Appendix

## Program Highlights for FY 2007

USDOT's Climate Change Center is undertaking several research projects that support CCSP Goals 4 and 5, and are expected to be completed in FY 2007:

- Developing a tool to allow comparative analysis of emissions from different modes of transportation, including aviation, automobile, marine, and diesel transportation
- Exploring adaptation to potential impacts of climate change by partnering with the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies
  - Reexamine the role of design standards for transportation infrastructure in light of potential impacts from climate change
  - Develop operational responses to potential climate change impacts
  - Review approaches to decisionmaking under uncertainty
- Conducting an emissions analysis of freight transport, comparing land-side and water-side short-sea routes to develop and demonstrate a decision modeling tool
- Determining the potential effects of sea level rise on national transportation infrastructure.

The Center sponsors CCSP Synthesis and Assessment Product 4.7, "Impacts of Climate Variability and Change on Transportation Systems and Infrastructure—Gulf Coast Study." This project—initiated under the President's Climate Change Research Initiative—is a joint research effort with USGS. A Federal Advisory Committee was formed in 2006, and Phase I will be completed in 2007. Phase I will provide an integrated overview of infrastructure sensitivities in the region.

The Office of the Secretary is funding several projects for FY 2007 completion, including a *Best Practices Guidebook for Greenhouse Gas Reductions in Freight Transportation*. The Guidebook will be designed for use by companies and individual freight operators.

## Related Research

Many of DOT's programs have ancillary climate benefits:

- The Federal Highway Administration has numerous programs to prepare the highway system for weather irregularities and reduce air pollutants:
  - *Road Weather Management Program*. This program seeks to better understand the impacts of weather on roadways. The Clarus initiative will develop and demonstrate a national integrated surface transportation road weather observing, forecasting, and data management system.
  - *It All Adds Up to Cleaner Air*. This collaborative effort advocates simple, convenient actions people can take in their daily lives to contribute to an overall improvement in air quality.
  - *Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Improvement Program*. The CMAQ program provides over \$8.6 billion in funds to State transit agencies to invest in projects that reduce emissions from transportation-related sources over a period of 6 years (2004-2009).
  - *Idle-Reduction Activities*. DOT, EPA, and DOE have provided funding for the implementation of idle-reduction projects around the country (both on-board and off-board technologies) for transportation, air quality, and energy stakeholders. The projects have resulted in reductions in criteria air pollutants, such as NO<sub>x</sub>, as well as reductions in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This initiative has expanded to include idling emissions from marine, rail, and off-road heavy-duty engines.

# O U R C H A N G I N G P L A N E T

- The National Highway and Transit Safety Administration sets new Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards for light trucks, increasing energy efficiency and thus decreasing greenhouse gas emissions.
- FAA is developing numerous environmental analytical tools, including the System for assessing Aviation's Global Emissions (SAGE). This system generates aviation emission inventories for baseline conditions, forecasts technology and operational improvements, and uses market-based measures to reduce fuel use. It is used to calculate aviation's fuel efficiency goal and assess cost-effective options to limit or reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Fuel Cell Program has researched and demonstrated fuel cell bus technology since the mid-1990's. FTA also conducts alternative fuels research.
- Other programs for congestion mitigation, hydrogen-powered transportation, and transit developments all will potentially reduce greenhouse gases.

