

Environmental Stewardship

Transportation makes our communities more livable, enhancing the quality of our lives and our society. At the same time, transportation generates pollution and noise, and uses valuable land and aquatic habitat on which fisheries depend. Approximately two-thirds of transportation-related emissions of those pollutants originate from on-road motor vehicles. However, total on-road mobile source emissions declined from 87 million tons in 1988 to 62 million tons in 2000, marking a 29 percent improvement in a little more than a decade. No matter how much is done to improve the capacity and efficiency of our transportation system, we cannot consider our programs to be successful unless we also manage the effects on our environment and our quality of life.

DOT's objective is to reduce the time it takes to gain benefits from transportation projects while minimizing negative environmental impacts. The FY 2006 budget request includes \$4.0 billion in funding to continue progress in achieving our environmental outcomes. This will require further streamlining of the environmental review process and greater emphasis on program level and major-project oversight activities in conjunction with the Federal, State and local agencies involved.

Reduce pollution and other adverse environmental effects of transportation

- ❖ Reduce the Impacts of Transportation on Wetlands and Ecosystems. The budget requests \$278.3 million for FHWA in FY 2006 to ensure that the program-wide ratio of wetland acres replaced per acre that are unavoidably affected by Federal-aid Highway projects is at least 1.5-to-1 in FY 2006. This goal was exceeded in 2004, with over 2 acres replacing every acre adversely impacted.

Wetlands are important natural ecosystems that filter pollutants, minimize potential floodwater damage and provide essential habitat for the maintenance of diverse plant and animal life. FHWA works with the States to ensure that transportation infrastructure projects do as little harm as possible to the Nation's wetlands. FHWA will support activities in the States to improve highway planning and project development, thereby enhancing the scenic beauty of facilities, promoting native habitat conservation, protecting wildlife populations, and reducing impacts on land and water resources in general. Funds will also be used for research, technical assistance, and public education initiatives to support further implementation of exemplary ecosystem and habitat conservation initiatives. An exemplary ecosystem is an action or measure that will help sustain or restore natural systems and their function and values. Examples include mitigation projects that support wildlife movement and habitat connectivity, the development of watershed-based environmental assessment and mitigation approaches, the use of wetland banking, and the use of special measures to prevent invasive species along highway right-of-ways.

- ❖ Reduce Emissions. The President's budget requests \$3.2 billion in FY 2006 for FHWA, FRA, FTA, and MARAD for environmental programs that help to reduce emissions. One of DOT's performance goals for FHWA and FTA is to ensure that the 12-month moving average of the number of areas with transportation emissions conformity lapses in FY 2006 is no greater than six. DOT aims to reduce mobile source emissions by encouraging the use of less polluting transportation; designing and implementing infrastructure that reduces congestion and emissions; researching and modeling the emissions impacts of investment choices; and supporting the development of fuel- and emission-efficient vehicles. FHWA and FTA will fund improvement projects in States to ease congestion, reduce emissions, improve highway planning, and

expand transportation options. Funds will also be used for research, technical assistance, and public education initiatives to improve air quality. In 2006, MARAD will implement an Environmental Management System and continue to work to mitigate air quality problems and evaluate ballast water treatment technologies.

- ❖ Reduce Pipeline Spills. The FY 2006 budget request includes \$23.3 million for PHMSA to ensure that the amount of hazardous liquid materials spilled per million ton-miles shipped by pipelines in FY 2006 is no greater than 0.0060 tons. To reduce pipeline failures, thereby reducing hazardous liquids spills from pipelines, PHMSA reviews the compliance of large hazardous liquid pipeline operators subject to PHMSA's integrity management program (IMP). PHMSA will increase IMP reviews to 75 percent of pipeline miles operated by the Nation's 65 largest hazardous liquid pipeline operators, accelerate integrity testing, comprehensively evaluate all pipeline risks, and strengthen Federal and State pipeline safety oversight. Testing, evaluation, and repair will result in finding and solving problems before they lead to failures, thereby directly supporting the goal of reducing spills. These initiatives support the National Energy Policy for energy infrastructure growth by improving the integrity of, and public confidence in, existing pipeline infrastructure.
- ❖ Limit Exposure to Aviation Noise. The budget request includes \$289 million for FAA in FY 2006 to ensure that the number of people in the United States who are exposed to significant aircraft noise levels - a Day/Night Average Sound Level (DNL) of 65 decibels or more - continues to decline. FAA will address the environmental impacts of airport projects, primarily aircraft noise. FAA will also provide expertise and funding to assist in abating the impacts of aircraft noise in neighborhoods surrounding airports by purchasing land, relocating persons and businesses, soundproofing residential homes or buildings used for educational and medical purposes, purchasing noise barriers and monitors, and researching new noise prediction and abatement models and new technologies.
- ❖ Clean Up DOT Facilities. The budget request includes \$75.1 million for FAA, MARAD, and OST in FY 2006 to ensure that the percentage of DOT facilities categorized as No Further Remedial Action Planned (NFRAP) under the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) is no less than 93 percent in FY 2006. Facility cleanup will comply with the SARA process and the requirements of the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan. A "worst first" prioritization system is used to assign higher priority to those facilities representing the greatest potential hazard to the public health and the environment.

Regulatory factors at the local, State, and Federal levels are also considered in the decision-making process. FAA funds pollution prevention; complies with occupational safety, health and environmental regulations; promotes good energy management practices; and conducts environmental impact analyses. In addition, MARAD conducts an obsolete ship disposal program in support of DOT's strategy to improve DOT-owned or controlled facilities. MARAD has a statutory deadline of September 30, 2006, to dispose of all obsolete ships on hand. In 2006, MARAD proposes to remove approximately 13 ships from the reserve ship fleet sites for disposal, and to relocate the N/S SAVANNAH to Charleston, South Carolina, closer to where the reactor decommissioning project will occur.

Improve timeliness of environmental review for federally funded infrastructure projects

- ❖ Improve Project Review Efficiency. The budget requests \$81.5 million in FY 2006 for FAA and FHWA to streamline the completion of an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment on all infrastructure projects. The overall performance target is to reduce the median time for completing an environmental impact or environmental assessment on all DOT-funded infrastructure projects to 30 months in FY 2006, and to reduce the percentage of Environmental Justice cases that remain unresolved after one year to 35 percent in FY 2006. Executive Order 13274 contains a mandate for DOT to reduce the time required for decision-making for transportation infrastructure projects. Environmental reviews consume a significant amount of time in project review and final decisions. A key challenge to DOT's stewardship of the environment vis-à-vis the Nation's transportation system is to strike a better balance between adding capacity and doing so at the smallest reasonable impact to the human and natural environment. Executive Order 12898 directs each Federal agency to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations. To achieve this objective, DOT operates under existing authorities, such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. DOT's Environmental Justice policy incorporates these considerations in all DOT programs, policies, and activities.

DOT's Environmental Stewardship Performance Budget is distributed as follows:

