

# **Federal Role in Surface Transportation Research**

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# U.S. Research & Technology (R&T) “Enterprise”

- Decentralized
- More than research—innovation support
- Limited incentives to innovate
- Comparatively low overall funding
- Surprisingly successful
- Federal role crucial

# Federal Role in Highway Research

- Federal aid for state DOT research
- In-house research and research management
- University research
- “Special” research programs
- Technology transfer

# Recommended Characteristics: Federal Highway R&T

- Clear mission that complements other programs
- Sustained stakeholder involvement
- Provisions for competition and merit review
- Mechanisms for information management and dissemination
- Adequate resources
- Leadership of national R&T activities

**Table 1**  
**U.S. Public-Sector Spending on Highway Research**  
**(thousands of dollars)**

<u>U.S. DOT</u>	<u>FY 2003</u>	<u>FY 2006</u>
FHWA	137,000	169,000
ITS	98,000	95,000
University Research	24,000	60,000
NHTSA	85,000	92,000
FMCSA	<u>7,000</u>	<u>7,000</u>
<b>Total, U.S. DOT</b>	<b>351,000</b>	<b>423,000</b>
 <u>State DOTs</u>		
Federal-Aid minimum	125,000	149,000
<b>Total, State DOTs</b>	NA	<b>326,000</b>

**Table 2**  
**Congressional Designations and Earmarks within**  
**Selected U.S. DOT Highway Research Activities**

	<u><b>FY 2003</b></u>	<u><b>FY 2006</b></u>
<b>FHWA</b>		
% designated	<b>26</b>	<b>58</b>
% earmarked	<b>21</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>ITS</b>		
% designated	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>
% earmarked	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>University Research</b>		
% earmarked	<b>69</b>	<b>100</b>

# Reference Material

- TRB, *The Federal Role in Highway Research and Technology*, TRB Special Report 261, 2001.
- TRB, *Strategic Highway Research: Saving Lives, Reducing Congestion, Improving Quality of Life*, TRB Special Report 260, 2001.
- Advice to Federal Transit Administration on its R&T agenda contained in letter reports from TRB's Transit Research Analysis Committee (2005, 2006a&b, 2007 pending)

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