Driving Down Climate Change in 2009

Opportunity and Strategy in the 111th Congress

Rail-Volution 2008
San Francisco
We know we need to reform our federal transportation policy…

Business as usual will increase VMT and Climate Change

- More than 80% of money dedicated to roads and highways
- Funding formulas reward increasing VMT, fuel use, lane-miles
- High hurdles to obtaining transit funding
- No connection to land-use policy
- Does not consider environmental or economic benefits
...but these eggs are too important to put them all in the same basket!

- Time is of the essence
- There’s not much money to work with
- The politics are tricky
- No one is guaranteeing victory
What else can we do in 2009?

- Alternative Federal Policy Opportunity
  - Climate Change Legislation
  - Economic Stimulus
  - Infrastructure Investment
…and how do we do it?

Senate Strategy: Making the Case

- Climate Change and Oil Dependence
- Job Creation
- Domestic Investment
Federal Policy Options: Climate Change

Use climate revenue to support transit, smart growth, capacity building

- Grants for low-carbon transportation and smart growth development
- Incentive to adopt performance-based VMT reduction targets with strong accountability mechanisms
- State, regional, local capacity building on smart growth planning: data, tools, scenario analyses
- Blueprint planning grants, learning networks (like CA)
- Opportunity to set the stage for climate-friendly transportation bill
Federal Policy Options: Climate Change

- We have a foothold, but there’s lots of room to improve
  - Increased funding
  - More effective performance standards
  - Accountability
  - Greater flexibility

- Sen. Boxer will return to climate change in 2009
- Sen. Carper – Clean-TEA
- EPW – Sen. Sanders, Clinton, Cardin, Lautenberg
Federal Policy Options: Econ. Stimulus

- Transit and smart growth investments create green jobs...
  - Every $1 billion invested in public transportation creates at least 41,000 green collar jobs
  - 19 percent more than new road and bridge construction
  - Ready-to-go transit projects in 78 metro areas nationwide,
  - Potential for 7 million green jobs
Federal Policy Options: Econ. Stimulus

...and ease transportation costs for families.

- The cheapest gallon of gas is the one you don’t buy…
- Transportation is the second largest household expense after housing – higher in some regions
- Two-adult, two-car household can save ~$6000 annually by eliminating one car and taking public transportation
- Cuts household greenhouse gas emissions up to 30 percent
Byrd stimulus package: Supports clean cars, invests in highways, meager transit provisions
- $25 billion in auto company loans for advanced, energy-efficient vehicles
- $300 million for advanced battery research
- $8 billion in formula highway investments
- $2 billion for transit agencies to address capital and operating needs
- $350 million for Amtrak capital projects

Stimulus package will be a top priority in 2009
- Obama: focus on clean energy
- Advocates need to make the case for clean transportation
- Associated climate benefits are key
Federal Policy Options: Infrastructure

- Enormous nationwide infrastructure deficit
  - Energy, water, transportation
  - Governors and mayors make excellent allies
  - Investments must create jobs and address climate change
  - Matching grants can leverage state and local investments
Federal Policy Options: Infrastructure

- **National Infrastructure Bank**
  - $60 billion fund independent of Congressional direction
  - Finances projects costing more than $75 million
  - Sets national priorities for transit, water, housing
  - Evaluation criteria: economic growth, environmental benefits, traffic reduction, smart growth land use

- **Significant political support from leadership**
  - Sen. Obama has endorsed the idea in policy platforms
  - Sen. Dodd, chair of Banking Cmte. is lead sponsor
  - Gov. Rendell is a leading proponent
Seize the day, boys!

The Change Election: stars are aligning to offer amazing opportunities for real reform
- New leadership, new ideas
- Opposition is still strong
- But inertia is our greatest obstacle

Keys to success
- **Organize**: new constituencies, new winners
- **Communication**: simple, persistent message of clean energy, green jobs, American investment
- **Government is on the rise**: shore up allies and create leaders
- **Private sector still matters**: opportunities for entrepreneurs
- **Preparation**: be first, be clever
Questions? Comments?

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