

Summary of CLEAN TEA:

S. 575, Clean Low-Emissions Affordable New Transportation Equity Act

The Challenge:

This legislation recognizes that the United States cannot meet its climate change goals without addressing emissions from the transportation sector. Transportation is responsible for about one-third of greenhouse gas emissions; passenger automobiles and light trucks alone contribute 21 percent. The transportation sector must be responsible for a proportionate amount of the solution.

Why Do we Need Legislation?

Since 1980, the number of miles Americans drive has grown three times faster than the U.S. population, and almost twice as fast as vehicle registrations. Although new vehicle technology and low carbon fuel can substantially reduce emissions from automobiles and light trucks, these gains are likely to be offset by continuing growth in vehicle miles traveled. It is critical that legislation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions also provides people with low-carbon transportation options through community design and transportation alternatives.

What Would the Legislation Do?

CLEAN TEA is predicated on the adoption of a comprehensive climate change bill that would create a cap and trade program. Under such a system, overall greenhouse gas emissions would be capped and polluters would have to acquire credits at auction to emit greenhouse gases. Under CLEAN TEA, 10 percent of the funding generated through this auction would be used to create a more efficient transportation system and lower greenhouse gas emissions through strategies like:

- funding new or expanded transit or passenger rail;
- updating zoning to support transportation plans; and
- making neighborhoods safer for bikes and pedestrians.

In order to be eligible for the funding authorized by this legislation, cities and state departments of transportation would have to review their transportation plans and determine how they could reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The bill then provides federal funding for projects in those transportation plans to be distributed to states and localities based on the expected reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in each plan. States and cities with more ambitious plans would receive greater funding.

Who Supports the Legislation?

CLEAN-TEA is supported by a number of smart growth and transportation advocates. It is being sponsored on the Senate side by Senators Carper (D-DE) and Specter (D-PA). On the House side, the sponsors are Reps. Blumenauer (D-OR), Tauscher (D-CA), and LaTourette (R-OH).

Clean Low-Emissions Affordable New Transportation Efficiency Act

Section by Section

Sec. 1 Title

Sec. 2 Creation of Transportation Alternative Program

§ 6301 Definitions

§ 6302 Establishes the Low Greenhouse Gas Transportation Fund.

§ 6303 Reserves 10 percent of climate change auction proceeds for the Fund.

§ 6304 Plans

- (a) States that the goal of the plans is to increase mobility, reduce VMT and reduce oil use.
- (b) Secretary, in consultation with the Administrator, must issue regulations within one year of enactment.
- (c) States and MPOs that represent areas with over 200,000 people shall revamp their long range transportation plans to meet the goals in (a) by investment in transit, passenger and freight rail, bike and pedestrian facilities, demand management, roadway operational improvements, updates to zoning and land use plans, improvements in travel and land use data collection, street connectivity and construction practices.
- (d) Voluntary participation is permitted by MPOs that represent areas with under 200,000 people.
- (e) Funding under this chapter may not be used for projects to increase capacity for single occupant motor vehicles.
- (f) Plans must be submitted to the Secretary within 2 years of enactment and updated (and resubmitted) according to the schedule laid out in section 134 and 135 of Title 23.
- (g) The Secretary, with concurrence of the Administrator, must approve the plans within 180 days if they find that the plan is likely to meet the goals and targets set in those plans. Plans developed before enactment of the chapter can be approved for funding.
- (h) Plans must be developed with significant public involvement, regional coordination and coordination between transportation, environment,

housing and land use agencies at all levels of government. Targets must be set in 10-year increments.

- § 6305 Recommendations: The Transportation Research Board shall submit a report to the Secretary and Administrator to 1) improve data, research and tools for measuring greenhouse gas emissions from transportation and 2) regarding policies and projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector.
- § 6306 Technical Standards: The Secretary, with the concurrence of the Administrator, shall set standards for data collection, monitoring, planning and modeling within five years, considering the recommendations submitted under section 6305. After those standards are set, states and localities must comply with them to have future plans and updates approved.
- § 6306 Funding, Implementation and Limitations
- (a) The Secretary shall make funding available for the development of plans.
 - (b) At least 80 percent of funds under this chapter must be used for implementation of plans and project lists. The Secretary, in coordination with the Administrator, shall develop a formula for allocating funds to states and localities to implement their plans that reflects the expected reductions under each plan, ensures that 60 percent is used for MPO plans, emphasizes mobility for vulnerable populations and (in the first five years) considers communities that took early action.
 - (c) The Secretary may withhold funds from this chapter if it is found that a state or locality did not comply with any requirement in this chapter.
 - (d) Nothing in this chapter shall infringe on local land use authority.
 - (e) All projects under this chapter must comply with federal design, procurement and construction guidelines.
 - (f) Funds raised by congestion pricing under this chapter must be available to fund all projects eligible for funding under section 6304(c).
 - (g) Conforming amendment.