



American Association of State Highway
and Transportation Officials



August 5, 2024

Ms. Veronica Vanterpool
Acting Administrator
Federal Transit Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Acting Administrator Vanterpool:

On behalf of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), and Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), a coalition of national trade associations representing entities responsible for safe and efficient public transportation, we write in support of the enclosed November 1, 2023 letter sent by the California Department of Transportation, and co-signed by several other State Departments of Transportation (DOTs), expressing the need for investment in modern technology to improve transit operations and enhance the customer experience to help build public transit ridership. Specifically, we support the State DOTs' request for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to clarify that FTA recipients and subrecipients may use State purchasing schedules (including purchasing schedules from other States) to procure such technology and equipment. We encourage FTA to issue a Dear Colleague letter and Frequently Asked Questions to outline this important procurement method.

It is essential that public transit agencies have access to every tool at their disposal to make technological investments, including innovative but well-established procurement methods such as State purchasing schedules. Medium-sized, small, and rural public transit providers face challenges in acquiring advanced technology like open payment systems and real-time passenger information due to limited resources and expertise. States have an opportunity to standardize and organize these procurements to ensure competitive pricing (on behalf of political subdivisions) and improve interoperability, making certain technology and services available to public transit agencies that they may not otherwise be able to obtain. As noted in the November 1, 2023 letter, California's Department of General Services has established State purchasing schedules that transit agencies have successfully leveraged to purchase interoperable contactless bank card readers and transit processing software; and those schedules are open to local agencies across the country. Clarifying the authority for public transit agencies to use State purchasing schedules as a method of procurement may also encourage other States to adopt complementary purchasing schedules for other innovative technologies for transit agency use.

While FTA permits the use of State purchasing schedules under Federal law, many procurement officials and staff at transit agencies and State DOTs are unfamiliar with this method, especially when procuring new technology and software that is not custom-made.

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Accordingly, we strongly support the request by the State DOTs for FTA to clarify that public transit agencies may use State purchasing schedules (including purchasing schedules from other States) to procure innovative technology and equipment. We encourage FTA to issue a Dear Colleague letter and Frequently Asked Questions to outline this important procurement method.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you on this issue.

Sincerely,

Paul P Skoutelas

Paul P. Skoutelas
President & CEO
APTA

Jim Tymon

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Executive Director
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Enclosure

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