



FRAME FOR MOBILITY

NATIONAL COMMERCE & FREIGHT BLOCK GRANT

Title II — Formula Block Grant Programs

A FRAME Policy Paper · The FRAME Act, Official Draft of December 15, 2025 · Sections 205–208

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PART I

THE PROBLEM

Freight delay is a production cost, and it is metered. The American Transportation Research Institute's *Cost of Congestion to the Trucking Industry* puts congestion's charge on trucking at \$108.8 billion in 2022, up from \$94.6 billion a year earlier — 1.2 billion hours of delay, equal to more than 436,000 drivers idle for a full working year, at \$7,588 per combination truck. The Texas A&M Transportation Institute's 2025 Urban Mobility Report prices the whole system at \$269 billion in 2024. None of this cost appears in a transportation budget. All of it appears in the price of goods.

The failure points are specific, and they are documented. In the Federal Highway Administration's Jason's Law survey, 37 State departments of transportation, 72.5 per cent of respondents, reported a commercial vehicle parking problem in their State, and 75 per cent of drivers reported difficulty finding safe parking at night. A driver who cannot park cannot legally rest; the shortage is a safety exposure and a capacity loss.

Against this, federal freight funding today is a modest allocation inside a general highway program — one purpose among many, neither sized to the measured cost of delay nor aimed at the points where delay concentrates: the bottlenecks, port gates, and at-grade crossings where road and rail stop each other. And the planning behind it carries no duty to consult the operators who move the goods.

THE PROBLEM IN NUMBERS

\$108.8B

Cost of congestion to the trucking industry in 2022 — 1.2 billion hours of delay (ATRI)

\$7,588

Congestion cost per combination truck, per year (ATRI)

200+

At-grade crossing conflicts eliminated by the Alameda Corridor (ACTA)

75%

Of truck drivers report difficulty finding safe parking at night (FHWA, Jason's Law survey)

THE PROPOSED SOLUTION

Give freight its own grant. Instead of freight competing for a modest share inside a general highway program, the bill creates a dedicated freight fund, distributed to every State by formula in predictable amounts, year after year. The money is reserved for the places where freight loses time and money — the circulatory system of the national economy, funded as a system in its own right.

The money follows a freight plan. To receive it, a State must keep a current plan for its freight network, and every project paid for from the grant must fit that plan. And the plan cannot be written by government alone: when projects are chosen, the State must sit down with metropolitan planning bodies, public port authorities, freight rail operators, and the private businesses that run the supply chain. The knowledge of where the system fails sits with the people who use it daily; the bill puts them in the room where the money is allocated.

The spending list is drawn from the failure points themselves. Untangling bottlenecks on the corridors freight depends on. Better road connections into ports, freight terminals, and major shipping sites. Separating roads from railways where they cross at ground level, so neither mode waits for the other. Truck-only lanes where volumes justify them, and safe, legal parking where drivers can rest. And the traffic technology — signals, sensors, and information systems — that keeps busy freight corridors flowing.

The same price discipline as the rest of the bill applies here: new general-purpose traffic lanes are the most expensive choice a State can make with federal money, because added general capacity refills with new traffic.

WHAT CHANGES

Freight gets its own funding stream. A dedicated grant, sized and planned as a national system, rather than a side allocation inside a highway program.

The freight plan governs. No current plan, no money; projects outside the plan do not qualify.

The operators are at the table. Ports, railroads, planners, and supply-chain businesses are consulted as a matter of law, not courtesy.

Spending follows the evidence. Bottlenecks, crossings, port connections, parking, and corridor technology — the documented points of failure.

THE LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL

Sections 205–208 carry the subtitle. Section 205 repeals the stand-alone National Highway Freight Program (**23 U.S.C. §167**); Section 206 makes the conforming amendments. Freight is brought into Title II as a dedicated, formula-funded block grant: the National Commerce & Freight Block Grant (**Section 207**), apportioned under Section 208. The authorization is \$28,016,000,000 for fiscal year 2027 (**Section 104**).

The purpose clause is precise: “to provide flexible formula funding to States to make strategic investments in freight-related infrastructure and operations that improve the efficiency, reliability, and resiliency of the national supply chain and support the economic competitiveness of the United States” (**Section 207**). The standard is not miles built; it is whether freight moves more efficiently, more reliably, and with greater resilience. Section 103’s own test: “strengthen the economic competitiveness of the United States by ensuring the efficient movement of freight and goods.”

THE CONDITION: A FREIGHT PLAN, CONSULTED

As a condition of receiving funds, a State shall develop and maintain a State freight plan in accordance with section 70102 of title 49, as in effect on the day before enactment, and projects funded under the subtitle must be consistent with that plan (**Section 207**). In developing projects, the State shall consult with metropolitan planning organizations, public port authorities, freight rail operators, and relevant private sector stakeholders in the supply chain — a consultation duty stated in the grant itself, not left to guidance. Subtitle B is the only Title II subtitle that writes the private sector into the decision.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- **Bottleneck relief.** Construction, reconstruction, and operational improvements on highway corridors to alleviate freight bottlenecks and improve intermodal connectivity.
- **Port and intermodal connections.** Improvements to surface transportation connections to public ports, intermodal facilities, and major freight generators.
- **Grade separations.** Elimination of at-grade highway-railway crossings to improve safety and freight fluidity.
- **Truck capacity and parking.** Construction of dedicated truck-only lanes or commercial motor vehicle parking facilities.
- **Corridor technology.** Deployment of intelligent transportation systems and other technologies, under Section 107, to improve the efficiency and reliability of freight corridors.

Projects remain subject to the same Federal requirements that govern the rest of Title II (**Section 207**), and must be designed to support the Section 103 national goals, “with a particular focus on economic competitiveness and the efficient movement of freight and goods.” Section 208 apportions the grant among the States for fiscal years 2027 through 2031 in accordance with Section 105.

PART IV

THE DATA CASE

The documented returns on the exact investments Section 207 makes eligible are a matter of record. When Los Angeles consolidated four freight rail branch lines into the Alameda Corridor — a 20-mile expressway to the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, opened in 2002 — the project eliminated conflicts at more than 200 at-grade crossings, raised line speed from 10 to 40 miles per hour, and cut rail transit time to the transcontinental yards by more than half. That is the measured outcome of the two eligibility lines this subtitle writes into law: surface connections to public ports, and elimination of at-grade highway-railway crossings (**Section 207**).

The parking line is equally empirical. In FHWA’s Jason’s Law survey — the federal government’s own census of truck parking — 37 State departments of transportation, 72.5 per cent of respondents, reported a commercial vehicle parking problem in their State, and 75 per cent of drivers reported difficulty finding safe parking at night. A driver who cannot park cannot legally rest; the shortage is a safety exposure and a capacity loss in the same fact. Section 207 makes commercial motor vehicle parking facilities an eligible use of the freight grant itself, so the remedy is funded by the same instrument that prices the failure.

The targeting logic closes the case. Duranton and Turner’s peer-reviewed estimate in the *American Economic Review* puts the elasticity of vehicle travel with respect to lane miles at approximately 1: general-purpose capacity refills. FRAME therefore prices new general-purpose lanes at a 50 per cent Federal share (**Section 106**) and aims the freight grant at the points where delay concentrates — bottlenecks, crossings, connections, and the technology that meters flow — where an hour removed is an hour kept.

The scale of the grant answers the scale of the measured problem. A congestion charge on trucking of \$108.8 billion a year (ATRI, 2022) is met with a dedicated authorization of \$28,016,000,000 for the first year alone, apportioned by formula so that every State can program multi-year corridor work against known amounts — the precondition for projects of Alameda Corridor scale, which are planned in decades, not grant cycles.

A freight system is judged at the loading dock and the checkout line, not at the ribbon cutting. Subtitle B takes the one part of the network whose performance is measured in the price of everything else, gives it a dedicated formula grant, conditions the money on a freight plan written with the operators who use it, and confines eligibility to the failure points the data names. That is the whole design — and it is sufficient.



Freight delay is a tax on everything. This grant funds its repeal at the points where it is charged.

A dedicated formula grant, a freight plan as the condition, the supply chain at the table, and eligibility aimed at bottlenecks, crossings, ports, and parking.

Evidence check: ATRI’s congestion figures are for 2022 (its 2024 update) and are industry-survey based; the TTI system figure (\$269 billion, 2024) uses a different accounting and the two are not additive. The Alameda Corridor is a rail project; it is cited for the crossing-elimination and port-connection mechanics, the same conflict points whether the corridor carries rail or road freight.

SOURCES & COLOPHON

SOURCES

Legislative text: *Framework for Rebuilding America’s Mobility Economy (FRAME) Act*, Official Draft, December 15, 2025 — Title II, Sections 205–208; Table of Contents at Section 101; cross-referenced provisions at Sections 102–107. All statements of the proposal, the eligible activities, and the funding mechanics are taken from the bill.

American Transportation Research Institute, *The Cost of Congestion to the Trucking Industry: 2024 Update* — \$108.8 billion and 1.2 billion hours in 2022; \$7,588 per combination truck. Texas A&M Transportation Institute, *2025 Urban Mobility Report* — total United States congestion cost of \$269 billion in 2024. mobility.tamu.edu. Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority — corridor record: more than 200 at-grade crossing conflicts eliminated; four 10-mph branch lines consolidated into one 40-mph route; opened April 2002. acta.org. Federal Highway Administration, *Jason’s Law Truck Parking Survey Results and Comparative Analysis* — 37 State DOTs (72.5 per cent) reporting a parking problem; 75 per cent of drivers reporting difficulty finding safe parking at night. ops.fhwa.dot.gov. Duranton, G. & Turner, M., “The Fundamental Law of Road Congestion,” *American Economic Review* 101(6), 2011 — elasticity of vehicle-kilometres travelled with respect to lane-kilometres of approximately 1.03.