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**New Report Documents Progress and Needed Investment to
Move Freight Programs Forward In the 21st Century**

Release of the report marks first anniversary of FAST Act

WASHINGTON –The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and the American Association of Port Authorities are today releasing a national freight infrastructure report, [*The State of Freight II—Implementing the FAST Act and Beyond*](#), marking the one-year anniversary of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

“Transportation matters more today than ever before, and this report serves as a blueprint for state DOTs, Congress and the new administration in Washington D.C. to address the critical freight infrastructure needs of our nation,” said AASHTO President and MaineDOT Commissioner David Bernhardt. “One of my top priorities as AASHTO President is to focus on intermodal freight capacity constraints and work collectively to improve the vital connections between rail, ports, intermodal facilities and the national surface transportation system necessary to meet the projected demand in population growth and freight movement over the coming decades.”

AASHTO and AAPA agree that a well-functioning freight transportation system is the essential building block for a thriving economy. The report demonstrates that while states are making progress, improvements to critical freight infrastructure have not kept pace with current and future demands. The report includes a number of key recommendations to leverage private-sector investment and move lawmakers to provide additional and ongoing funding resources outside of the Highway Trust Fund.

“Last year, AAPA released its initial [*The State of Freight*](#) survey report, which identified \$29 billion in baseline investment seaport landside transportation infrastructure needs over the next decade to keep pace with rising freight volumes and increasing population density in metropolitan areas,” said Kurt Nagle, AAPA’s president and CEO. “This report is the second step in that process, presenting a comprehensive national overview of where states are collectively in developing state freight plans, one year after the FAST Act was passed.”

Compiling and analyzing results from a combined AASHTO- AAPA survey completed in November 2016, *The State of Freight II* analyzes how states fund freight-specific investments through state-dedicated or discretionary funding, and how these funding sources can potentially work with federal freight investments. For example, the survey found that 71 percent of states have state freight plans that they are actively working to make FAST Act compliant. Additionally, 57 percent of states have targeted more than 6,200 freight projects for inclusion in their state freight plans, while 35 percent have identified a combined \$259 billion in costs for their state's freight plan projects.

“Louisiana has a 30-year history of supporting ports and water transportation through the state's Port Construction and Development Priority Program,” said Shawn D. Wilson, Ph.D., Secretary of the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development. “Our ports depend on seamless connections to highways, inland waterways, railways and aviation. In Louisiana, there are billions of dollars in transportation needs for all modes, with a heavy emphasis on state highway pavement and bridge preservation to restore infrastructure, improve safety, and increase mobility. Gov. John Bel Edwards understands the state and national importance of investing in infrastructure and that is why he formed the Governor's Task Force on Transportation Infrastructure Investment. This task force was formed to make recommendations for solutions to address Louisiana's multimodal infrastructure needs that will benefit mobility of people and goods across all modes of transportation.”

To help states plan sustainable investments in a national freight network, AAPA and AASHTO recommend several approaches, including:

- Having the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) continue providing Highway Trust Fund (HTF) allocations to states for highway freight projects through the National Highway Freight program;
- Having the USDOT coordinate its Build America Bureau and freight advisory committees with state freight plans to better leverage private-sector investment;
- Requesting that Congress provide additional and ongoing funding resources outside of the HTF for the overall multimodal freight network in such a way it can supplement highway formula dollars and fund discretionary grant programs; and,
- Moving the Harbor Maintenance Tax (HMT) from discretionary to mandatory spending to enable all the revenues from HMT collections to be used for maintenance of deep draft navigation channels and providing more equity.

Of the 50 state departments of transportation and the District of Columbia's, 12 have direct relationships with one or more ports in their state. Furthermore, 38 states are connected by navigable waterways and/or marine highway routes, which creates opportunities and obvious synergies for close DOT/port relationships.

As a center for economic and logistical activity, U.S. seaports support more than 23 million U.S. jobs and their cargo activities provide \$321 billion in annual federal, state and local tax revenue. In 2014, cargo activities at U.S. deep-water ports generated \$4.6 trillion in total economic activity, comprising about 26 percent of the nation's economy, according to Martin Associates' [*2014 National Economic Impact of the U.S. Coastal Port System*](#) study, released in March 2015.

-- 30 --

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials represent State Departments of Transportation in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. AASHTO is a nonprofit, nonpartisan association serving as a catalyst for excellence in transportation. On Twitter: <http://twitter.com/aashtospeaks>.