



Recreational Trails Program Re-Authorization

Introduction

Congress has passed and the president signed multi-year national highway bill known as the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, or the FAST Act. The bill reauthorizes the Federal Highway Administration's Recreational Trails Program (RTP) for the next five years and provides \$85 million annually for the program. RTP is important to recreational riders all over the country.

Background

Since its inception the RTP has provided approximately \$730 million for thousands of state and local trail projects across the country, including many that benefit equestrians. If the program was to continue it needed to be re-authorized in the 2012 Highway Bill.

The RTP provides funding directly to the states for recreational trails and trail-related facilities for all recreational trail users. It was created in 1991 as part of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 and was last re-authorized in 2005 as part of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU). This law is about to expire. The RTP will have to be re-authorized in the national surface transportation program bill in the coming months if it is to continue.

RTP projects consist of construction, maintenance and restoration of trails and trail related facilities as well as the acquisition of easements or property for trails. Although each state manages its own program, 30% of RTP funds must be spent on non-motorized projects like equestrian trails, 30% on motorized, and 40% percent on multiuse projects. RTP is one of the few sources for federal funding of trail projects that are not on federal land available to equestrians. The program has been a great resource for equestrians to fund projects in their state and local parks.

The Bills

The bill reauthorizes the Federal Highway Administration's Recreational Trails Program (RTP) for the next five years and allocates \$85 million in annual funding for the program.

Status

This bill is now law.

AHC Position

The AHC, in conjunction with a broad coalition of recreational trail users, supported re-authorization of RTP.