



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Transit
Administration**

Deputy Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
Washington DC 20590

JUL 08 2011

Dear Colleague:

I write to you today to inform you of a new Federal Transit Administration (FTA) initiative on adapting public transportation assets and services to the impacts of climate change.

Subway tunnels, busways, rail tracks, and maintenance facilities are vulnerable to increased flooding from more frequent and intense rain storms, rising sea level, and storm surges. Extreme heat can deform rail tracks, stress materials, reduce asset life, and jeopardize customer and worker health and safety. In fact, recorded weather data already shows increases in heat waves and heavy precipitation, which are affecting transit now. While transit and other sectors can and must play a role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions to lower the severity of impacts, because of the level of emissions already in the atmosphere, some climate changes are already in the pipeline and responsible risk management calls for adaptive responses to reduce vulnerability. FTA seeks to be a partner with the transit industry in responding to this challenge and we have a number of resources and opportunities available.

On June 2, FTA published on www.Grants.gov and our public website a request for applications for transit climate change adaptation assessment pilots. The pilots will fund assessments of the vulnerability of transit agency assets and services to climate change hazards, develop initial adaptation strategies, and link these strategies to transit agency organizational structures and activities. One of the pilots will demonstrate the integration of climate adaptation within an asset management system. FTA plans to make four cooperative agreement awards and total funding available is \$525,000. The deadline for applications is August 25 and I encourage you to apply. This summer FTA will publish a report that examines anticipated climate impacts on U.S. transit, climate change adaptation efforts by domestic and foreign transit agencies, transit adaptation strategies, risk management tools, and implementation considerations. We believe this information will be helpful to you in making plans to adapt to our changing climate.

We will also be hosting a series of workshops and webinars to engage transit agency and FTA regional and headquarters staff on the issue. The first workshop will be held August 3 in Los Angeles, directly following the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Sustainability Workshop. Subsequent workshops are tentatively scheduled for September in Chicago and October in Washington, DC, while national webinars are scheduled for August 8 and early November. I hope you or your staff can attend one of the workshops or participate in the webinar.

I also want to inform you that I am releasing today a policy statement committing FTA to examining the impacts of climate change on FTA mission and operations and considering options for addressing the challenges posed by climate change in FTA policies and programs. This statement follows requirements by the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) for Federal agencies to plan for the impacts of climate change and does not include any binding obligations on FTA grantees. I would also like to direct you to the U.S. Department of Transportation policy statement on this topic. Both policy statements, along with information on the other activities described above, can be viewed at www.fta.dot.gov/sustainability by clicking on "FTA Climate Change Adaptation Initiative."

The transit industry already has much experience in planning, designing, and operating systems for a wide range of climate conditions in our geographically diverse country as well as for handling weather extremes. By taking into account projected climate conditions rather than relying solely on historic conditions, I am confident that we can responsibly manage these risks in order to meet our shared goals of mobility, state of good repair, safety, and sustainability.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Therese McMillan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Therese McMillan