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**Federal Transit
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REGION 10 BULLETIN NO: 09-18

Subject: **CORRECTED:** American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Projects
- STIP Amendments

Program Area: Planning

Date: March 5, 2009

The Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Planning Final Rule allows for grouping a number of projects within a single Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) entry, sometimes referred to as 'buckets' or 'bundles.' Many states do this for Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding sources and some also do it for statewide FTA funds (e.g., 5311, 5316, 5317).

To expedite STIP amendments that include American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (ARRA) projects, we are requesting that Metropolitan Planning Organization's (MPO) and States implement this option in programming urbanized area (UZA) formula funds (5307), fixed guideway (5309), and non-urban (5311), as appropriate.

The regulations (Sec. 450.324(f)) allow "projects that are not considered to be of appropriate scale for individual identification in a given program year" to be grouped "by function, work type, and/or geographic area". The regulation states that projects cannot be regionally-significant (as defined by MPO) and, in non-attainment / maintenance areas, must be exempt from air quality conformity analysis (see Table 2 from the Conformity Rule below). **Also, projects included in a bundle must be a Categorical Exclusion (CE) or have an environmental determination.**

Grouping projects within the STIP would allow transit districts flexibility in programming ARRA funds. In addition, if changes are needed to the project mix a STIP amendment would not be necessary. For MPOs, projects should be grouped by UZA and, for tracking and reporting purposes, **a current list must be maintained and must be included in the STIP for each bundle.**

This and other issues are addressed on the FTA Web site (*ARRA Questions and Answers for FTA Grantees* http://www.fta.dot.gov/index_9118.html).

For further information, contact Region 10's Ned Conroy at (206) 220-4318 or email ned.conroy@dot.gov.

Sincerely,

Linda M. Gehrke

for R.F. Krochalis
Regional Administrator

Transportation Conformity Rule

Table 2—Exempt Projects

Mass Transit

Operating assistance to transit agencies.
Purchase of support vehicles.
Rehabilitation of transit vehicles[1].
Purchase of office, shop, and operating equipment for existing facilities.
Purchase of operating equipment for vehicles (e.g., radios, fare box, lifts, etc.).
Construction or renovation of power, signal, and communications systems.
Construction of small passenger shelters and information kiosks.
Reconstruction or renovation of transit buildings and structures (e.g., rail or bus buildings, storage and maintenance facilities, stations, terminals, and ancillary structures).
Rehabilitation or reconstruction of track structures, track, and track bed in existing rights-of-way.
Purchase of new buses and rail cars to replace existing vehicles or for minor expansions of the fleet[1].
Construction of new bus or rail storage/maintenance facilities categorically excluded in 23 CFR part 771.

Note: [1] *In PM10 and PM2.5 nonattainment or maintenance areas, such projects are exempt only if they are in compliance with control measures in the applicable implementation plan.*