

“(i) the State and the relevant metropolitan planning organizations jointly apply to the Secretary for the permission to base the obligation on other factors; and

“(ii) the Secretary grants the request.

“(4) COORDINATION IN URBANIZED AREAS.—Before obligating funds for an eligible project under subsection (c) in an urbanized area that is not a transportation management area, a State shall coordinate with any metropolitan planning organization that represents the urbanized area prior to determining which activities should be carried out under the project.

“(5) CONSULTATION IN RURAL AREAS.—Before obligating funds for an eligible project under subsection (c) in a rural area, a State shall consult with any regional transportation planning organization or metropolitan planning organization that represents the rural area prior to determining which activities should be carried out under the project.

“(6) OBLIGATION AUTHORITY.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—A State that is required to obligate in an urbanized area with an urbanized area population of 50,000 or more under this subsection funds apportioned to the State under section 104(b)(7) shall make available during the period of fiscal years 2022 through 2026 an amount of obligation authority distributed to the State for Federal-aid highways and highway safety construction programs for use in the area that is equal to the amount obtained by multiplying—

“(i) the aggregate amount of funds that the State is required to obligate in the area under this subsection during the period; and

“(ii) the ratio that—

“(I) the aggregate amount of obligation authority distributed to the State for Federal-aid highways and highway safety construction programs during the period; bears to

“(II) the total of the sums apportioned to the State for Federal-aid highways and highway safety construction programs (excluding sums not subject to an obligation limitation) during the period.

“(B) JOINT RESPONSIBILITY.—Each State, each affected metropolitan planning organization, and the Secretary shall jointly ensure compliance with subparagraph (A).

“(f) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the cost of a project carried out using funds apportioned to a State under section 104(b)(7) shall be determined in accordance with section 120.

“(g) TREATMENT OF PROJECTS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a project assisted under this section shall be treated as a project on a Federal-aid highway under this chapter.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The analysis for chapter 1 of title 23, United States Code (as amended by section 11203(b)) is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 174 the following:

“175. Carbon reduction program.”.

**SEC. 11404. CONGESTION RELIEF PROGRAM.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 129 of title 23, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(d) CONGESTION RELIEF PROGRAM.—

“(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

“(A) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible entity’ means any of the following:

“(i) A State, for the purpose of carrying out a project in an urbanized area with a population of more than 1,000,000.

“(ii) A metropolitan planning organization, city, or municipality, for the purpose of carrying out a project in an urbanized area with a population of more than 1,000,000.

“(B) INTEGRATED CONGESTION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.—The term ‘integrated congestion management system’ means a system for the integration of management and operations of a regional transportation system that includes, at a minimum, traffic incident management, work zone management, traffic signal timing, managed lanes, real-time traveler information, and active traffic management, in order to maximize the capacity of all facilities and modes across the applicable region.

“(C) PROGRAM.—The term ‘program’ means the congestion relief program established under paragraph (2).

“(2) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish a congestion relief program to provide discretionary grants to eligible entities to advance innovative, integrated, and multimodal solutions to congestion relief in the most congested metropolitan areas of the United States.

“(3) PROGRAM GOALS.—The goals of the program are to reduce highway congestion, reduce economic and environmental costs associated with that congestion, including transportation emissions, and optimize existing highway capacity and usage of highway and transit systems through—

“(A) improving intermodal integration with highways, highway operations, and highway performance;

“(B) reducing or shifting highway users to off-peak travel times or to nonhighway travel modes during peak travel times; and

“(C) pricing of, or based on, as applicable—

“(i) parking;

“(ii) use of roadways, including in designated geographic zones; or

“(iii) congestion.

“(4) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—Funds from a grant under the program may be used for a project or an integrated collection of projects, including planning, design, implementation, and construction activities, to achieve the program goals under paragraph (3), including—

“(A) deployment and operation of an integrated congestion management system;

“(B) deployment and operation of a system that implements or enforces high occupancy vehicle toll lanes, cordon pricing, parking pricing, or congestion pricing;

“(C) deployment and operation of mobility services, including establishing account-based financial systems, commuter buses, commuter vans, express operations, paratransit, and on-demand microtransit; and

“(D) incentive programs that encourage travelers to carpool, use nonhighway travel modes during peak period, or travel during nonpeak periods.

“(5) APPLICATION; SELECTION.—

“(A) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a grant under the program, an eligible entity shall submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

“(B) PRIORITY.—In providing grants under the program, the Secretary shall give priority to projects in urbanized areas that are experiencing a high degree of recurrent congestion.

“(C) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the cost of a project carried out with a grant under the program shall not exceed 80 percent of the total project cost.

“(D) MINIMUM AWARD.—A grant provided under the program shall be not less than \$10,000,000.

“(6) USE OF TOLLING.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding subsection (a)(1) and section 301 and subject to subparagraphs (B) and (C), the Secretary shall allow the use of tolls on the Interstate System as part of a project carried out with a grant under the program.

“(B) REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary may only approve the use of tolls under subparagraph (A) if—

“(i) the eligible entity has authority under State, and if applicable, local, law to assess the applicable toll;

“(ii) the maximum toll rate for any vehicle class is not greater than the product obtained by multiplying—

“(I) the toll rate for any other vehicle class; and

“(II) 5;

“(iii) the toll rates are not charged or varied on the basis of State residency;

“(iv) the Secretary determines that the use of tolls will enable the eligible entity to achieve the program goals under paragraph (3) without a significant impact to safety or mobility within the urbanized area in which the project is located; and

“(v) the use of toll revenues complies with subsection (a)(3).

“(C) LIMITATION.—The Secretary may not approve the use of tolls on the Interstate System under the program in more than 10 urbanized areas.

“(7) FINANCIAL EFFECTS ON LOW-INCOME DRIVERS.—A project under the program—

“(A) shall include, if appropriate, an analysis of the potential effects of the project on low-income drivers; and

“(B) may include mitigation measures to deal with any potential adverse financial effects on low-income drivers.”.

(b) HIGH OCCUPANCY VEHICLE USE OF CERTAIN TOLL FACILITIES.—Section 129(a) of title 23, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraph (10) as paragraph (11);  
and

(2) by inserting after paragraph (9) the following:

“(10) HIGH OCCUPANCY VEHICLE USE OF CERTAIN TOLL FACILITIES.—Notwithstanding section 102(a), in the case of a toll facility that is on the Interstate System and that is constructed or converted after the date of enactment of the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act of 2021, the public authority with jurisdiction over the toll facility shall allow high occupancy vehicles, transit, and paratransit vehicles to use the facility at a discount rate or without charge, unless the public authority, in consultation with the Secretary, determines that the number of those vehicles using the facility reduces the travel time reliability of the facility.”.

**SEC. 11405. PROMOTING RESILIENT OPERATIONS FOR TRANSFORMATIVE, EFFICIENT, AND COST-SAVING TRANSPORTATION (PROTECT) PROGRAM.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 1 of title 23, United States Code (as amended by section 11403(a)), is amended by adding at the end the following:

**“§ 176. Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-saving Transportation (PROTECT) program**

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) EMERGENCY EVENT.—The term ‘emergency event’ means a natural disaster or catastrophic failure resulting in—

“(A) an emergency declared by the Governor of the State in which the disaster or failure occurred; or

“(B) an emergency or disaster declared by the President.

“(2) EVACUATION ROUTE.—The term ‘evacuation route’ means a transportation route or system that—

“(A) is owned, operated, or maintained by a Federal, State, Tribal, or local government;

“(B) is used—

“(i) to transport the public away from emergency events; or

“(ii) to transport emergency responders and recovery resources; and

“(C) is designated by the eligible entity with jurisdiction over the area in which the route is located for the purposes described in subparagraph (B).

“(3) PROGRAM.—The term ‘program’ means the program established under subsection (b)(1).

“(4) RESILIENCE IMPROVEMENT.—The term ‘resilience improvement’ means the use of materials or structural or non-structural techniques, including natural infrastructure—

“(A) that allow a project—

“(i) to better anticipate, prepare for, and adapt to changing conditions and to withstand and respond to disruptions; and

“(ii) to be better able to continue to serve the primary function of the project during and after weather events and natural disasters for the expected life of the project; or