



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, D.C. 20240

JAN 31 2013

Memorandum

To: Director, Bureau of Land Management
Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation
Director, National Park Service
Director, Fish and Wildlife Service
Assistant Secretary, Indian Affairs

From: Rhea S. Suh 
Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget

Subject: Federal Lands Access Program (Federal Lands Highway)

Secretary Salazar recently sent a letter (attached) to Secretary of Transportation LaHood in which he identified priorities for consideration in the Federal Lands Access Program (Access Program) authorized under Title I of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). The program, under which the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) distributes funding to the States by formula, requires that Federal Land Management Agencies (FLMA) be consulted during project selection. Final funding decisions are made by the Programming Decision Committees (PDC) without direct representation by FLMA's.

The letter seeks to provide national perspective and input to the local processes for full consideration of priorities involving Federal lands access and the values of America's Great Outdoors. After the letter was sent to Secretary LaHood, we subsequently met with representatives of FHWA to raise our concerns. With this first meeting and continued dialog, we hope to maintain high levels of collaboration with the Department of Transportation and the FHWA to ensure our participation is integrated into current and future programs.

The Access Program funds Federal Lands Access Transportation Facilities¹ with preference to projects accessing high-use Federal recreation sites or Federal economic generators, so your involvement and input is critical to the advancement of the Secretary's many strategic initiatives involving access to Federal Lands. While the PDCs will undoubtedly consider the FLMA's local priorities, we want to make them aware that these are also national priorities that have the support of our Secretary and, relative to the goals of America's Great Outdoors, the President. We request that you circulate the Secretary's letter through your organization to promote this message and encourage your staffs to do the same as part of the consultation process.

¹ Federal Lands Access Transportation Facility is defined as a public highway, road, bridge, trail or transit system that is located on, is adjacent to, or provides access to Federal lands for which title or maintenance responsibility is vested in a State, county, town, township, tribal, municipal, or local government.

The Department has identified actions that will help to ensure the Secretary's priorities are emphasized in recommendations to the PDCs over the coming months and years. First, bureaus are asked to manage a national effort to identify, coordinate, prioritize, and support eligible sites and projects within the States. In the near term, for the process this year, this effort should result in a bureau list of eligible transportation projects that have already been coordinated with State and local partners and are clearly supportive of both the State project evaluation criteria and the Secretary's preferences. The list will be used to develop the "state by state list of projects that most clearly support our priorities and which would facilitate an integrated and seamless Federal-state transportation system", as stated by the Secretary.

As bureaus develop this initial state-by-state list please note that the list does not need to be all inclusive of projects or of States but should identify, at a minimum, the bureaus top priorities in alignment with the Secretary's initiatives and the State project evaluation criteria, with primary focus on the 12 western states that received 80% of the Access Program funding². Bureaus should also ensure the projects' consistency with transportation plans and other comprehensive planning documents that address access to Federal lands. The Department recognizes that the Access Program is new and that field units are still in the process of forming partnerships and identifying and coordinating eligible candidate projects with State and local partners. Accordingly, the Department anticipates bureau adjustments to the project priorities and will coordinate a process for periodic updates of project lists.

The second action is a longer term effort, requiring additional time and coordination over the coming months and years, but will help us to prepare improved capacity to justify needs through the reauthorization process. As the Access Program matures and we all gain a better understanding of its implementation and the FLMAs' role, we request that you expand your national efforts and develop longer term (5-7 years) recommendations for priority Access Program sites and projects. Parallel to this the Department will initiate development of an internal process for prioritizing these sites and projects across the bureaus. Additional details, guidance, and templates for this action will be assembled through your bureau Transportation Coordinators and the Asset Management Team.

Lastly, if during the implementation of the above efforts you identify a priority project that is of such national significance, far reaching impacts, or mission criticality that it should be considered a Departmental priority, please highlight that project in your submittals. Such projects will be reviewed for consideration as a Secretarial priority when communicating with our partners at the FHWA.

Please use the attached template to submit a summary of your initial project list to this office through Craig Lasser, PE, at Craig_Lasser@ios.doi.gov no later than February 21, 2013. We also request a copy of the completed Project Proposal Form for each project in the format required by the respective PDC. We plan to share the Department's priorities with DOT and FHWA in order to maintain a high level of awareness and collaboration relative to Interior's priorities. We hope this improve ongoing support to address your transportation related funding needs.

² The following States received 80% of the Access Program funds per the requirements of MAP-21: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter. Should you have any questions please contact Craig Lasser at the email address above or at 202-513-0697.

cc: Assistant Secretary – Land and Minerals Management
Assistant Secretary – Fish and Wildlife and Parks
Assistant Secretary – Water and Science



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

DEC 11 2012

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary of Transportation
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing in regard to the Federal Lands Access Program (Access Program) authorized under Title I of the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). The projects eligible through this program lend critical support to many strategic initiatives I have underway across the Department of the Interior (DOI) that will promote economic development and job creation by improving access to parks, refuges, public lands, and Indian lands. Although the Federal land management agencies will be consulted at the state-wide project selection level, the final programming decisions for the distribution of the \$250 million are made by the Programming Decisions Committees (PDCs) within the states, without representation of those land management agencies. With that in mind, I hope you will communicate my personal preferences to the Federal Highways Administration and its Divisions so they can be shared with the PDCs throughout the Nation.

The MAP-21 defined 2 categories of high-use Federal recreation sites and economic generators that provide a reasonable initial filter for Access Program consideration. However, our land management agencies and the Bureau of Indian Affairs can provide further and more specific information. In addition, we believe there are opportunities in the Access Program to promote the Administration's America's Great Outdoors Initiative (AGO), which includes 130 projects in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. These projects bring together state, local and tribal governments and partner organizations to implement conservation and outdoor recreation access. Many of these projects have already accomplished great things – new trails, restored wildlife habitat, expanded parks, and new national monuments – but others still need additional work to achieve a meaningful result.

In addition to AGO, I would request that preference be provided to “shovel-ready” transportation projects that:

- Improve safety in accessing public and tribal lands;
- Provide access to public lands and tourism destinations;
- Allow for increased economic development of Indian communities;
- Provide multi-modal access to public lands;
- Are partner-sponsored and leverage partner resources; and
- Protect natural or cultural resources.

At an appropriate time in the application process, prior to the PDCs convening, DOI will provide to the Federal Highway Administration a state by state list of projects that most clearly support our priorities and which would facilitate an integrated and seamless Federal-state transportation system.

Please notify my staff when the Federal Lands Access Program project calls are issued, and when application processes and important meeting dates are established, so that we have the opportunity to participate and provide project information. Finally, we request notification of final state project selections concurrently with notification to the bureau transportation staff. Our contact on this matter is Mr. Craig Lasser, PE, who can be reached at (202) 513-0697 or craig_lasser@ios.doi.gov.

We are planning to begin a series of meetings with your senior staff to promote the collaborative approach outlined here. I am proud of the work we have jointly accomplished to date, and I hope that we could continue our collaboration to support strategic initiatives in our two Departments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ken Salazar". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ken Salazar