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USDOT Constructs Build America Bureau.

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) announced the establishment of the Build America Bureau, “which will drive transportation infrastructure development projects in the United States by streamlining credit and grant opportunities while providing technical assistance and encouraging innovative best practices in project planning, financing, delivery and monitoring.”

“The Build America Bureau will be a one-stop shop to help develop projects and provide financing in a single streamlined, effective and comprehensive manner,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. “It will allow USDOT to be responsive to America’s changing transportation needs and opportunities, so we can deliver real, tangible infrastructure development for local, regional and national population centers.”

The Build America Bureau combines the following USDOT programs: the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA), the Railroad Rehabilitation & Improvement Financing (RRIF), the private activity bond (PAB), the Build America Transportation Investment Center (BATIC) and the new \$800 million Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies (FASTLANE) grant program.

The bureau will utilize the full resources of all the modes within USDOT and continue to promote a culture of innovation and customer service. To the customer, there will be a single entity in charge of USDOT credit, large scale and intermodal project development and a single point of contact for working with USDOT on infrastructure finance and development.

The Bureau Outreach and Development team, continuing the work of the BATIC, will work with the project sponsors to support them on how they can best combine credit, funding and innovative project delivery approaches, such as public-private partnerships (P3s) and then offer project-level technical assistance to get them ready to pursue it.

The department’s credit team will be able to underwrite loans from multiple sources together, so that the customer is no longer getting a TIFIA loan or a RRIF loan, but instead a single credit package from USDOT to help them build the infrastructure they need. Also, the bureau will manage the application and evaluation process for the FASTLANE grant program, which funds high-impact projects that address key challenges affecting the movement of people and freight.

BATIC, which was announced in 2014, has expanded the department’s ability to meet the needs of the nation’s transportation system. BATIC serves as a single point of contact and coordination for states, municipalities and project sponsors looking to utilize federal transportation expertise, apply for federal transportation credit programs and explore ways to access private capital in P3s. Since BATIC’s formation, USDOT has closed more than \$10 billion in financing to support \$26 billion in projects.

Railway Age

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