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January 23, 2015

Gregory G. Nadeau  
Acting Administrator, Federal Highway Administration  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.  
Washington, DC 20590

Re: Extension of Commenting Period for Docket No. FHWA-2015-0053

Dear Acting Administrator Nadeau:

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) is requesting that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) extend the comment period for the National Performance Management Measures; Assessing Pavement Condition for the National Highway Performance Program and Bridge Condition for the National Highway Performance Program; Proposed Rule (Docket Number FHWA-2015-0053) until May 8, 2015. This request is not being made to delay the implementation of the MAP-21 performance management regulations; rather, it is meant to provide the State transportation agencies with adequate time to provide FHWA with a substantive response that will serve as valuable input to the rulemaking process.

AASHTO has been working with our member departments to prepare comments for this and other performance management-related notice of proposed rulemakings (NPRM). After initial discussions with our members concerning the Assessing Pavement Condition for the National Highway Performance Program and Bridge Condition for the National Highway Performance Program NPRM, it became apparent that the scope and complexity of this NPRM will require a more extensive review by the State DOTs and coordination by AASHTO staff in order to provide FHWA with a comprehensive and robust response.

For example, this NPRM will require the coordination of the following personnel at a State DOT:

1. Bridge and Pavement Engineers (design, inspection and maintenance) to assess the technical aspects of data collection and reporting;
2. Performance Managers to assess how targets will be established;
3. Asset Managers to determine how these requirements fit within the larger context of an asset management program and approach; and
4. Transportation Planners to understand the impact of the potential penalties on the project planning and programming process.

The number of personnel that will have to be coordinated with at the State level is significantly more than with previous NPRMs. As such, AASHTO is requesting that FHWA provide an additional five weeks of commenting time with a revised closing date of May 8, 2015. We believe that this additional time will enable the State DOTs and AASHTO to provide FHWA with more comprehensive and substantive comments, ultimately leading to an enhanced rulemaking outcome.

We appreciate your consideration in this matter and we look forward to providing FHWA with a comprehensive response to the FHWA NPRM. If you would like to discuss this issue any further, please contact Matthew Hardy, AASHTO's Program Director for Planning and Policy at (202) 624-3625.

Sincerely,

  
Bud Wright  
Executive Director