

ACEC Indiana *Short List*

PUBLISHED FOR ACEC INDIANA MEMBERS

Critical Issues for ACEC Indiana Members Discussed with Congress

Amid the daily clamor of concerns, opportunities, and just “things,” staying on message with a core principle is difficult, but important for any organization. I continue to stress that ACEC’s central mission is business advocacy because at its heart, it can only come from those involved in our business.

In April, a delegation of ACEC Indiana members participated in ACEC’s Annual Legislative Summit held in Washington, D. C. The most important aspect of it was the dissemination of information on key business issues that enabled us to have effective visits on Capitol Hill with our members of congress.

National ACEC continues to play a prominent role in supporting federal candidates who support our positions on infrastructure funding and fair business practices. ACEC Indiana is doing its part; last year we met our national PAC goal and are well on the way to early achievement of the increased 2008 target. Financial support of candidates is essential but must be paired with direct interaction by us to educate them on the key issues since we are the experts.

The ACEC Indiana members met with the offices of Senators Lugar and Bayh and our nine House representatives. During our meetings, the following issues were emphasized:

Transportation Funding Shortfall

Projections show that Highway Trust Fund revenues will not meet spending levels specified in SAFETEA LU. In the short run, the fund is anticipated to have a negative balance of \$3.7 billion by FY 2009. A majority of this shortfall can be restored by crediting the program for emergency expenditures paid out of it since 1998; this would recapture \$3.4 billion or 92% of the shortfall. Without some action, state transportation programs will suffer a significant cut in the current program (albeit Indiana’s funding situation at this time is better than others). For the long run, it is important that full funding of the highway and transit spending levels authorized by SAFETEA LU at \$43.2 billion and \$10.3 billion, respectively, occur in FY 2009. Additionally, the funding situation everywhere would be aggravated by a “Gas Tax Holiday”, an expedient measure that should be strongly discouraged.

Expand Funding for Municipal Wastewater Treatment Programs

Last year the House of Representatives adopted H.R. 720, the Water Quality Financing Act, which authorizes and expands the Clean Water SRF to \$14 billion over 4 years. This bill includes a Qualification Based Selection (QBS) procedure in the procurement of engineering services. It also includes the requirement for a GAO Study on creating a dedicated, long-term funding source such as a Clean Water Trust



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Fund. This is a step in the right direction to address water quality issues across the nation and it has specific relevance to Indiana where 10% of the nation’s combined sewer overflows occur. Now Senate passage of companion legislation to H.R. 720 is needed.

Overtake the 3% Withholding Mandate

Section 511 of the Tax Increase Prevention and Reconciliation Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-222) is a sweeping new requirement mandating that federal, state and local governments withhold 3% from payments for goods and services. The law, scheduled to take effect in 2011, will cover all payments made by the federal and state governments, as well as large local governments. The provision, which would have very negative cash flow consequences, was designed to deter tax evasion, but it will penalize all tax businesses. All Indiana Senate and House members should be cosponsors of S. 777 and H.R. 1023 to repeal Section 511.

I urge you to engage your Senate and House members on these business issues. A more detailed summary of the issues and actions you can take are attached. These three areas need your advocacy and a successful outcome would be good for both our country and our businesses.



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