



A bold voice for transportation workers

TRANSPORTATION LABOR JOINS THE JOBS TO MOVE AMERICA COALITION

TTD's Executive Committee has long taken the position that when our government invests in transportation infrastructure and rolling stock, these expenditures must be leveraged to achieve the greatest possible economic impact and U.S. job growth. For this reason we have consistently and effectively advocated for the inclusion of strong Buy America provisions in federal transportation and infrastructure bills and have pushed for multi-modal, comprehensive reforms.

For example, we joined efforts to close the so-called "segmentation loophole" which allowed the San Francisco Bay Bridge to be built with 42,000 tons of Chinese steel, and to increase the transparency and reporting requirements for Buy America waivers. In addition, we have urged federal agencies to properly implement and aggressively enforce Buy America statutes and have found a willing and forceful ally in this effort in the leadership of the Department of Transportation.

As a continuation and logical expansion of our transportation Buy America advocacy, we are formally announcing participation in the Jobs to Move America Coalition. This groundbreaking effort, led by Los Angeles-based LAANE, and joined by TTD, the AFL-CIO, affiliated unions, and non-labor advocacy groups, will work to secure local procurement policies that reward bus and rail car manufacturers that create good-paying jobs here in America. This coalition will complement TTD's existing legislative and regulatory strategy by incorporating an on-the-ground approach that will push smart procurement policies.

We take this step for a single reason. While strong federal Buy American laws are needed, standing alone, they will not accomplish our ultimate objective of leveraging federal transportation dollars to create and sustain the greatest possible economic impact and job growth.

For instance, in July of 2012 the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) board approved the purchase of 775 new rail cars from Montreal-based Bombardier Transportation Company. While the bid technically complied with Buy America laws with 65% domestic content, the BART Board left a bid from Alstom Inc. on the table that would have provided rail cars with 95% domestic content, creating 500 new jobs in Hornell, NY and an additional 3,000 new jobs at component manufacturers. The BART procurement was a missed opportunity to establish and maintain a domestic supply chain for passenger rail cars that has not existed in decades. The loss of this contract was a blow to those who believe that as a nation, we can invest in companies that make transportation equipment here in America, but it also helped highlight areas where our policies fall short and where increased advocacy is needed.



In the aftermath of this contract LAANE came forward with a U.S. employment plan – in partnership with economists, community development and advocacy groups, veterans groups, and the labor movement – that enables transit agencies to offer manufacturers a voluntary incentive designed to reward companies that commit to re-shore manufacturing and spur creation of good American jobs. Under the plan, the companies bidding on publicly-funded transportation equipment orders can get credit for describing the number and quality of American jobs that will be created from the contract, as well as how they plan to develop the jobs (for example, recruitment, workforce development and training commitments). The public agency then compares the bids based on the cost of the transportation equipment, plus the employment benefits and overall economic impacts.

Since that initial introduction TTD and its affiliated unions have provided strategic and substantive input into the plan, and helped create the Jobs to Move America Coalition. Moving forward, the Coalition will take on the difficult task of implementing the U.S. employment plan in local and state procurements throughout the country. The goal will be to utilize our collective political leverage to empower local transit agencies to do the right thing, while also engaging key officials at the federal level to advance our priorities. By building political support for the plan on a local level, it will help incentivize manufacturing companies to submit proposals that create jobs here in the U.S. and provide opportunities for working people to gain a union voice on the job. From a national perspective this Coalition reinforces the need to broaden the labor movement’s advocacy efforts in a way that draws in natural allies, including organizations that focus on securing jobs for veterans and people living in disadvantaged communities.

TTD’s partnership with the Coalition is a powerful next step in transportation labor’s effort to foster a smart transportation procurement strategy that rewards good U.S. employers and maximizes job creation. This initiative is particularly important at a time when our nation’s transportation authorities are poised to spend billions in public funds to replace aging rail cars and buses. TTD is ready to do its part to ensure that the promise of Buy America is fully realized.

Resolution No. F13-01
Adopted October 29, 2013