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FAST Act Will Provide a More Stable Future for Transportation Funding in VT

MONTPELIER, Vt.—Passage of the new Federal Transportation Bill, known as the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act promises to bring a total of nearly \$1.1 billion over five years or a \$95.4 million increase in investment in Vermont’s transportation system. The FAST Act will provide a level of funding stability that allow the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTTrans) the ability to engage in long-range planning to improve the state’s roadways, public transit and rail systems.

“Now that congress has concluded their work on the FAST Act, we can put our people to work on the important business of improving our transportation system here in Vermont,” said Governor Peter Shumlin. “As always, it was the hard work of our congressional delegation that made sure this was a bill that addressed many of our key priorities and that didn’t leave rural states behind.”

“This is the first time since 2005 that congress has passed a long-term highway bill and we are pleased with the stability this will bring to our program,” said Transportation Secretary, Chris Cole. “The tenacity of our delegation ensured that our funding level was maintained and that we got a multi-year bill that will support our effort to fully participate in our national transportation system”.

At over 1300 pages, the FAST Act includes a number of formula and discretionary budget items that will require time to analyze, but public transit is a clear winner with a total investment of \$47 million or an increase of 19%. The rail title in the surface transportation act includes discretionary capital funding that Vermont can apply for to upgrade rail infrastructure and some operating funds for new passenger rail services such as extending the Ethan Allen to Burlington and the Vermonter to Montreal. The act also includes a new freight program and more flexibility in how National Highway Performance Program funds can be invested in bridge projects.