

Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA) Subcommittee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations

Friday, April 28, 2023

Note: This document is ACIR staff notes written during this subcommittee meeting. It is a public document and has been provided to meeting participants for their review and revised in accordance with any comments received but is not approved minutes of the meeting.

The agenda is available at:

<https://egov.ct.gov/PMC/Agenda/Download/17148>

The meeting recording is available at:

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/ACIR/Meetings/2023/2023-04-28_ACIR_IIJA_Audio.m4a

ACIR Members present: John Filchak, Matt Hart, Ron Thomas

CT Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Team participants (CT BILT): Mark Boughton, Tayler Thorpe

Other participants: Robert Aloise, Kim Lesay, Mike Muszynski, Brian O'Connor, Rick Porth, Elizabeth Sanderson, Margaret Wirtenberg

ACIR/OPM staff: Christine Goupil, Bruce Wittchen,

1. Call to order

Commission vice chair Filchak called the meeting to order at 10:33.

2. Discussion of state and regional solutions to municipal challenges in accessing federal Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act (IIJA) funding

Commission vice chair Filchak explained the goal of the meeting, which is to learn how the ACIR can assist [CT BILT](#)'s efforts. Dept. of Revenue Services (DRS) Commissioner Boughton, who is senior advisor to the Governor's for infrastructure, provided an overview, highlighting that the initial round of grants funded planning and that project implementation will require higher levels of funding.

DRS Commissioner Boughton acknowledged the ACIR's interest in finding ways to help municipalities meet federal requirements for a 20% local match and noted that state agencies are also seeking funding to satisfy that requirement for state projects. While the Commissioner acknowledged that they are hearing of potential difficulties that municipalities may have in making required local matches, he indicated that at the current time the Administration does not see a need for new state funding to cover such requirements.

Commissioner Boughton noted the cost to towns and the burden of handling the local match and the impact on municipalities that must get approval to do so from a town meeting or referendum. He said it is a significant problem and outlined approaches used in some other states. He recommended that regional Councils of Governments (COGs) and the CT Conference of Municipalities (CCM) collect data to show what municipalities are experiencing.

Commission vice chair Filchak mentioned that many municipalities have limited ability to write grants and said COGs can fill that role. Commission member Hart agreed and said his COG, the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG), has added staff to do that. He said experiences with the Safe Streets grant opportunity will be telling and his COG will collect the data that DRS Commissioner Boughton suggested.

Commissioner Boughton mentioned the federal [Justice40](#) environmental justice initiative and said it would be counterintuitive for municipalities lacking capacity to be unable to apply for federal funding. He said all have to help with this, noting that CCM is contracting with companies to assist municipalities. Brian O'Connor said CCM has signed contracts with two vendors and is a month into this process. Kim Lesay said the Dept. of Transportation also wants to help and Commissioner Boughton noted that DOT also must advocate for state funds to satisfy the match requirement for the state's own projects.

Commissioner Boughton mentioned an upcoming national summit he will attend in May and said he will convey these concerns. He noted that the local match is a problem around the country and he and Kim Lesay spoke about difficulties with the available guidance. Commission member Filchak said COGs are willing to do whatever they can to help.

Commission member Hart said there has never been more federal funding available but local costs are rising for other things, limiting municipalities' ability to also do capital projects. He asked how other states are handling this. Commissioner Boughton said he is watching Louisiana closely. He described the expected approach of the Louisiana Infrastructure Technical Assistance Corporation, which would assist with grant writing and financing, not choosing projects, but pointed out the importance of a governance structure.

Brian O'Connor asked if municipalities should continue to work together on applications through their COGs and Commissioner Boughton said more guidance is needed. We must see why certain regional applications have been rejected while others were approved. Commission member Hart asked what the best way would be to help and DRS Commissioner Boughton said that once there is a vision for an infrastructure bank there will be a need to advocate for it, noting the roles of state agencies and need for legislative action.

Commission vice chair Filchak thanked Commissioner Boughton, who emphasized the need to provide data and invited suggestions that he can take to Washington. He added that the ACIR can be a vehicle for helping municipalities, leveraging the work being done by CCM and COST.

3. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:57

Notes prepared by Bruce Wittchen, OPM