

the recently issued FHWA/FRA Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Alameda Corridor project in Southern California.

Amtrak's Northeast Corridor Improvement project received direct Federal funding, and environmental justice concerns have been and will continue to be addressed through the NEPA environmental review process. FRA grant activities are currently limited to Amtrak and the state rail assistance program. FRA has no direct control over Amtrak grant funds expenditures, and the state rail grants are small. Construction projects, under the state rail program, have been limited to rehabilitation of existing rail lines in non-urban areas, with minimal environmental impact. If high-speed rail funding is appropriated by the Congress, FRA will incorporate environmental justice considerations into its planning requirements. Environmental justice requirements are being referenced in the new joint Environmental Impact Assessment Procedures under development by FHWA, FTA, and FRA.

f. FTA and FHWA Public Involvement Activities

FTA, in cooperation with FHWA, made a major step toward providing stakeholders with access to the transportation planning, programming, and project development processes with the issuance of the joint regulations on planning, 23 CFR part 450 and 49 CFR part 613, on October 28, 1993. This is accomplished in two ways.

One is by requiring that transportation decisionmaking be done in coordination with affected institutional bodies, including, but not limited to, businesses, major employers, environmental groups, labor unions, local land use planners, human service agencies, and providers. Consulting with these stakeholders is an important step to properly considering the range of factors required as part of an area's transportation planning activities. Requiring the consideration of these factors recognizes the relationship between transportation systems and the economic, environmental, and social well-being of the communities and regions served by them. The intended effect of this transportation planning environment is to promote transportation decisions which complement other state and local policies with an eye toward community well-being.

Another important component to providing for an open decisionmaking process is the requirement that

decisionmaking be similarly open to the public. In fact, FTA and FHWA require public involvement to be "proactive and provide[s] complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and opportunities for early and continuing involvement" (23 CFR 450.212 and 450.316(15)(1b)), and to be a significant part of all statewide and metropolitan planning processes. In addition, a "process for seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households which may face challenges accessing employment and other amenities" (23 CFR 450.212(a)(6)). These requirements are treated in the regulatory language as expected outcomes of a public involvement process that is developed to meet the individual needs of the affected Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) or state.

To maximize the effective implementation of the above provisions, FTA and FHWA are working toward providing the staffs of MPOs and state departments of transportation with training and guidance on how to achieve these ends. To emphasize the importance of public involvement in local transportation decisionmaking, FTA and FHWA have developed a Policy on Public Involvement. The agencies have also developed guidance specific to implementing the public involvement provisions in the planning regulations. Additional training and assistance in public involvement is being developed to promote high quality public involvement, designed to actively involve the public in decisionmaking activities. A comprehensive course for both staff and decisionmakers of MPOs and state DOTs is under development, to be offered free of charge beginning late in 1995. In addition, there will be a full catalogue of public involvement techniques published to promote creativity in public involvement.

It is simply not enough to open the door and invite the public in. There needs to be some effort to ensure that persons and groups with substantial interests in their communities have access to the tools necessary for substantive participation in local transportation decisionmaking. Some of the project ideas that have surfaced to address this need include training workshops for community groups and the development of a 'citizens' guide to MPO and statewide transportation planning under Intermodal Surface Transportation Assistance Act (ISTEA), and a similar technical guide for

citizens that focuses on transportation modeling, planning assumptions, and transportation's relationship to other community services and resources.

g. Maritime Administration (MARAD)

The Maritime Administration has addressed environmental justice issues by complying with the National Environmental Policy Act and the Department of Transportation Administrative Order 600-1. In particular, over the past four years MARAD has completed two successive environmental audit reviews at three MARAD Reserve Fleet facilities (James River, Beaumont and Suisun Bay) and at two other facilities (United States Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, N.Y. and the Fire Training Center, Swanton, Ohio). Further, MARAD is currently engaged in a comprehensive review and analysis of requirements relevant to future clean-up of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) in its National Defense Reserve Fleets. In its role as the Federal advocate for increased productivity and competitiveness in the Nation's maritime affairs, MARAD will continue to address compliance with applicable environmental laws and regulations by the United States maritime community.

6. DOT Training on Environmental Justice

In order to ensure that environmental justice becomes integrated in all appropriate Departmental activities, DOT will hold informational seminars on environmental justice for selected program managers throughout the Department. Representatives of the environmental justice network will be invited to assist in the planning and conduct of these seminars.

7. Review and Revision of DOT Environmental Procedures

The Department will review and update, as appropriate, its Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts, DOT Order 5610.1C, to ensure that it is consistent with Executive Order 12898 and DOT's proposed order on environmental justice. Attachment 2 to Order 5610.1C sets forth guidance on the format and content of environmental review documents and compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and other environmental statutes, regulations, and executive orders such as Section 4(f) of the DOT Act. This attachment will be updated to reflect the requirements of Executive Order 12898