

125. TRANSPORTATION

We support development of a long-range national transportation policy that views transportation as a holistic system serving the needs of both passengers and freight across all modes and recognizes the importance of connectivity between modes. It should encourage exploration of public/private partnerships and be designed to support global competitiveness while developing the most economical and energy efficient methods of meeting future transportation needs.

Land Use

We will support:

1. Regulations which:
 - A. Provide improved noxious weed and brush control by state and local road authorities on the full width of highway rights-of-way.
 - B. Maintain safe levels of visibility.
 - C. Protect farmers' crops from unwarranted or careless spraying.
 - D. Ensure that ditch and roadside vegetation maintenance practices do not impair drainage to or from adjoining farm fields.
 - E. Preserve vegetative cover adequate to prevent soil erosion on roadsides and in ditches.
2. Enforcement of noxious weed and brush control by railroad authorities on railroad rights-of-way, including the use of a soil conserving cover crop whether the railroad is in operation or abandoned.
3. Giving counties the power to levy a fine of \$500 per acre of railroad rights-of-way where noxious weeds are not eradicated or controlled.
4. Enforcement of drainage laws and regulations on railroad rights-of-way.
5. Oversight of railroad construction projects and design standards by appropriate government agencies to minimize disturbance to adjoining farmland and farming operations and to adequately protect or repair drainage and drainage systems.
6. Efforts to ensure that highway construction and improvement projects do not cause serious, adverse impact to drainage nor cause erosion on adjacent land.
7. Utilization of marginal farmland or poorer grades of land for new railroad or highway construction projects where feasible in order to preserve tillable farmland.
8. Utilization of existing rights-of-way for new highways to the maximum extent feasible in order to minimize acquisition of new lands for highway purposes.
9. More equitable compensation to landowners for disruption of farming operations by highway construction.

Other

We support efficient mass transportation. We will support legislation or regulations to allow disconnection of counties by referendum from mass transportation authorities.

We encourage the use of biodiesel and ethanol by mass transit systems.

We support efforts to streamline the transportation project delivery process to reduce unnecessary time delays including:

1. Simplifying the environmental process for projects with few impacts.
2. Involving appropriate reviewing agencies early in the process to help expedite overall project schedules.
3. Requiring greater coordination among federal reviewing agencies and setting time limits for their review.

We support efforts to educate policy makers and the public to ensure they understand:

1. The value and necessity of efficient and effective transportation infrastructure.
2. The complexity and cost of both long-term maintenance and expansion of transportation infrastructure to meet future needs.
3. The importance of interconnectivity between modes.

4. Requiring reconstruction projects be completed as quickly and reasonably as possible minimizing impacts on the traveling public.