



## 2019-2020 Legislative Initiatives

COMTO was established to ensure opportunities and to provide maximum participation in all the modes of the transportation industry for minority individuals, veterans, people with disabilities and certified Disadvantaged/Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (D/M/WBEs) through leadership training, professional development, scholarship and internship funding, political advocacy, partnership building and networking opportunities.

The members of our more than 30 COMTO chapters across the country are individuals, students, transportation agencies, corporations, labor unions, academic institutions, industry non-profits and Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs). We are the presidents and chief executive officers who determine the direction of major transportation systems and the mechanics and operators who ensure the safe passage of millions of transportation riders every day. In short, COMTO actively advocates on behalf of hundreds of thousands of people in the U.S. who are transportation professionals, contractors, laborers and customers.

### Legislative Message

#### Local Hiring Preferences

COMTO is troubled by the current Administration's decision to terminate the Local Hiring Preference that enabled recipients of FTA and FHWA grants, including states and local agencies, to utilize local labor hiring preferences and economic-based labor hiring practices (i.e., low-income, underserved communities) to evaluate competitive bid submissions. This promoted economic development and empowerment both for local governments and the neighborhoods where public transportation projects are located. COMTO strongly urges Congress to act to restore the Local Hiring Preference which accounted for jobs and business opportunities for the minority community.

#### Workforce Development Initiatives/Business Development in Infrastructure

COMTO strongly supports efforts to promote diversity and inclusion in the workforce as well as continued authorization and expansion of programs like the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Department of Labor formula grants to states, allowing job seekers access to employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market, as well as to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy, particularly as new technologies and industries emerge.

We are encouraged by the introduction of new legislative initiatives in the U.S. Congress -- including the bicameral Build Local, Hire Local Act -- that propose infrastructure policy inclusive of local hiring, high quality jobs through training, wealth creation through improved small, minority and historically under-utilized (HUB) businesses opportunities, and enhanced quality of life through better working conditions, conscientiously planned transportation connectivity, and mobility and accessibility for all.

COMTO believes that a comprehensive national infrastructure program is a top priority and that it is imperative that equity, fairness and accountability be integral components to any future legislative proposals in order to preserve, enhance and reinforce policies that support the growing transportation needs of the entire country.

#### Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program

COMTO strongly endorses an FRA program to allow DBEs to competitively participate in contracts for heavy railroad projects, and related industries, awarded by state and local agencies that receive federal FRA funds. We urge Congress to require the U.S. DOT to expedite the requisite disparity study and institute a DBE participation plan for that agency.

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