FRAME FOR MOBILITY

FRAME and the Committee's Principles — An Architecture Map

Drafting material for the Senate surface transportation product — offered as fallback text and structure, not as a rival bill

Institute for Civic Service · The FRAME Act, Official Draft of December 15, 2025

The Institute for Civic Service has drafted a complete surface transportation act — the Framework for Rebuilding America's Mobility Economy Act (the FRAME Act), in seven titles — and offers it to the Committee as fallback text and structure for the Senate product: not as a rival to H.R. 8870, the BUILD America 250 Act (ordered to be reported by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, 62–2, on 22 May 2026), and not with any request for endorsement. For more information and the full legislation, go to frameformobility.org.

Title II of FRAME — the formula block grants in the first table below — can be read in full in the Act: frameformobility.org/assets/docs/FRAME-Act-Official-Draft-2025-12-15.pdf.

Chair Capito's principles

CHAIR CAPITO'S PRINCIPLE	HOW THIS MIGHT BE ADDRESSED	WHAT STAFF CAN LIFT	PROPOSED FRAME LANGUAGE
1. Safety and reliability — formula programs with a proven track record; eliminate duplicative programs	Title II of FRAME repeals the legacy modal programs and replaces them with three formula block grants — State of Good Repair & Resiliency (Sec. 203), National Commerce & Freight (Sec. 207), Community Access & Mobility (Sec. 211) — with express repeals at Secs. 201, 205 and 209. Title III of FRAME consolidates the competitive programs into three (Secs. 303, 307, 311). Safety is the first national goal (Sec. 401(a)(1)); the Act adopts the Safe System Approach toward zero roadway fatalities (Sec. 103(b)(1)) and declares state of good repair the highest investment priority (Sec. 103(b)(2)).	Lift the Title II of FRAME block-grant structure as the spine of the highway and transit titles. The repeal-and-consolidate architecture is the "eliminating duplicative programs" answer, ready to drop into Chair Capito's options memo.	**Attachment 2, Part A** — Title II of FRAME (Secs. 105–106, 203–211), attached to this email.

2. Program efficiency and permitting reform — faster delivery; certainty for partners	FRAME took on project delivery to make sure the money moves — delay is cost escalation, and less infrastructure improvement for the American people. Title V of FRAME makes state environmental-review assignment permanent (Sec. 501), funds state capacity to assume it (Sec. 502), creates a National Buy America Digital Portal with streamlined waiver review (Secs. 505–506) and rewards innovative contracting (Sec. 508). Title I of FRAME gives partners one apportionment methodology (Sec. 105) and one variable federal cost-share (Sec. 106). Title IV of FRAME (Secs. 401–411) replaces program-by-program reporting with a single performance and data spine.	Slot Title V of FRAME as the transportation-specific implementation of the Committee's permitting package — not a competing text. Lift Secs. 105–106 so states plan against one apportionment and one cost-share instead of a patchwork.	**Attachment 2** — Secs. 105–106 (Part A) and the spine of Title IV of FRAME (Part B). Title V of FRAME: the full Act, linked above.
3. State flexibility — no top-down mandates; varied state needs	The block grants carry broad eligible-activity categories (Secs. 203(c), 207(d), 211(c)) with state project selection inside them. Transitional apportionment holds every state at its anchor-year (FY2026) proportion for FY2027–31 (Sec. 105(b)), with statutory hold-harmless suballocations for urbanized and non-urbanized areas (Sec. 105(c)); any future formula is studied, not imposed (Sec. 105(d)). Local concurrence is required for block-grant projects inside metropolitan areas (Sec. 406(a)).	Defend the structure in markup as flexibility in Chair Capito's own language: broad categories, state selection, no new Washington program office — with the hold-harmless that keeps every state whole through the transition.	**Attachment 2, Part A** — Secs. 105, 203(c), 207(d), 211(c), attached to this email.

Ranking Member Whitehouse's priority: executability

Ranking Member Sheldon Whitehouse's test is whether the money verifiably moves — whether a future administration can stall a law on the books. FRAME's answer runs in two parts: project delivery (Title V of FRAME, in Chair Capito's table above) to make sure the money moves, and a whole system of performance requirements (Title IV of FRAME) to ensure dollars go where they can be expended. Title IV of FRAME is written as enforceable mechanics, each with a statutory date or consequence, not as aspiration:

Every section cited in this table is in **Attachment 2, Part B**, attached to this email.

THE PRIORITY	FRAME'S ENFORCEABLE MECHANIC	SECTION
Measures on a deadline	The Secretary must establish data-driven performance measures by rule within 18 months of enactment.	Sec. 401(b)
Targets states must set — and defend	States set data-driven targets within one year of the rule; the Secretary reviews them and may require adjustment where a target is not supported by the best available data.	Sec. 402(a)

An annual determination	The Secretary determines, every year, whether each state has made significant progress, with technical assistance directed to states that miss.	Sec. 402(c)
A consequence with teeth	A state that misses its safety targets three consecutive years forfeits 1 percent of its freight block-grant apportionment — reinvested inside that state as competitive safety grants.	Sec. 403
Visibility by default	Every state publishes an annual infrastructure health report card, including a searchable list of major projects funded; every report card and major-project status sits on a public National Infrastructure Data Portal with open, machine-readable access.	Secs. 407, 410
Comparable data, or no money	Adherence to the National Transportation Data Standard is a condition of receiving funds under the Act; money follows performance through the 5 percent apportionment bonus pool.	Secs. 409(d), 105(f)

The accompanying excerpt puts the formula title and the performance and data title in cut-and-paste form. The Institute asks for no endorsement of FRAME. The outcome it is working for is FRAME language, where staff judge it useful, in the Senate's own text.

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