



# PORTS-TO-PLAINS ALLIANCE

Securing the Benefits of Commerce to  
North America's Energy & Agriculture Heartland



## FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PORTS-TO-PLAINS ALLIANCE



***"A Corridor of National Significance"***



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## INTRODUCTION

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The [Ports-to-Plains Alliance](#) is a non-profit, non-partisan, community-driven advocacy group led by mayors, councilpersons, economic development officials, business and other opinion leaders from a nine-state, 2300-plus mile transportation and economic development corridor between Texas and Alberta, Canada.

Today, we collaborate with our federal and state leaders, partners in Canada and Mexico, and industry partners, to deliver the infrastructure, food and fuel to secure the quality of life of America's great cities. At the same time, we embrace America's new energy economy, and are capitalizing upon wind power, biofuels and other innovation sectors to renew one of America's greatest legacies, the rural heartland.

The north-south movement of goods and persons through this region relies on an existing network of mostly two-lane highways which have been designated by federal law as National Highway System High Priority Corridors: the Ports-to-Plains Corridor (#38), the Heartland Expressway (#14), and the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway (#58).

**These existing highways are inadequate to meet current and future needs of the region and the nation. *To promote economic security and prosperity throughout America's energy and agricultural heartland, these high priority corridors must be upgraded and modernized.***

An improved transportation network will produce significant benefits:

- It will improve safety, cutting accidents by 50 percent from today's levels.
- It will increase the efficiency of agricultural freight flow. Our corridor runs through six of the top ten farm states that produce nearly a quarter of all U.S. agriculture products.
- It is necessary for the development of the traditional energy resources essential to our nation's energy security. We serve eight of the top ten oil producing states. The corridor also goes through five of the top six natural gas producing states. A single oil well requires an estimated 1,200 truck movements to develop.

- It is essential to developing the growing renewable energy industry. We serve nine of the top ten states for wind energy potential, and five of the top twelve installed wind generation states. A single wind tower requires eight trucks for major parts, not including the crane, concrete or rebar. One planned wind farm in West Texas would install more than 2,600 towers, and put more than 21,000 trucks and 42,000 pilot cars on the highways in and out of the site.
- It is a cost-efficient way to take pressure off of highly-congested parallel corridors, such as the I-35 corridor.
- It will promote economic development in a region of the country that has the highest rate of population loss over the last decade and ensure that America's heartland and its communities are connected to America by a modern, efficient and safe transportation facility.

## **FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS**

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The Ports-to-Plains Alliance urges Congress and the Administration to expeditiously enact comprehensive, multi-year surface transportation legislation that modernizes our Nation's surface transportation network to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Given the urgency and magnitude of this undertaking, it is imperative that the Federal Government be the strong partner that it has been in the past. From the First Congress' support of lighthouses, buoys and public piers to make navigation "easy and safe;" to Henry Clay's support for internal improvements; to President Lincoln's support for the transcontinental railroad; to President Teddy Roosevelt's support of the Panama Canal; to President Franklin Roosevelt's support for a cross-country, high-level road system; to President Eisenhower's support of the Interstate Highway System and the Federal Highway Trust Fund; and to President Reagan's support for increased motor fuel user fees to preserve and modernize the Federal-aid highway network; the Federal Government has been instrumental in the development of our Nation's surface transportation system. This system unifies our country by providing for the easy movement of people and goods. Without it, "we would be a mere alliance of many separate parts," as President Eisenhower noted. The Federal Government must provide the leadership and resources to help preserve and modernize the national network for the 21st century.

In order to accomplish these goals, we support significant reform of the federal surface transportation programs, including development of a clear and compelling federal vision, a performance-based, outcome-oriented program structure, and an improvement in project delivery. The legislation should be balanced; meet the needs of small communities and rural areas as well as major metropolitan areas; fund system preservation and needed capacity; and be environmentally responsible and energy efficient.

*Recognizing that preserving and upgrading our national transportation infrastructure will be costly, we support significantly increased transportation investment and continued user financing through a dedicated trust fund.*

## **Policy Recommendations**

1. ***Rural Connectivity and Mobility*** -- The new legislation should include a major focus on upgrading and modernizing the transportation infrastructure that provides connectivity and mobility for America's small communities and rural areas, especially federally-designated high priority corridors on the National Highway System. It is imperative that the new legislation provide adequate, targeted resources sufficient to make significant progress toward upgrading our rural transportation network.



2. ***Freight Transportation*** -- The new legislation should also include a major focus on freight movement, including freight corridors in rural areas, especially high priority corridors on the National Highway System. It is imperative that the new legislation provide adequate, targeted resources sufficient to make significant progress toward upgrading our national freight network.



3. ***Border Infrastructure*** -- Border infrastructure is critical to promote the safe, efficient movement of goods, facilitating trade and supporting jobs in America. The new legislation should provide adequate, targeted resources sufficient to make the necessary investments in border infrastructure. We support the continuation of the Coordinated Border Infrastructure (CBI) program with adequate funding.

4. ***Rural Safety*** -- The new legislation should include a major focus on highway safety, especially safety on two-lane rural roads which often have fatality rates well above urban interstates. It is imperative that adequate, targeted resources be provided sufficient to allow the upgrading and modernizing of two-lane rural roads. This is especially the case with respect to National Highway System high priority corridors essential to the movement of people and goods in our rural heartland. These overburdened two-lane roads are carrying much of the food and fuel destined for our nation's major metropolitan areas.



5. ***Environment/Energy*** -- The new legislation should be environmentally responsible and energy efficient. As a Nation we must reduce greenhouse gas emissions and we must reduce or eliminate our reliance on overseas oil. It is critically important, however, that climate change requirements—whether included in surface transportation legislation, climate change legislation, or energy legislation—recognize that the options in rural areas are different than the options in major metropolitan areas. A one size fits all approach to climate change will not work. The legislation must provide sufficient flexibility to allow upgrading and modernizing of rural highways, especially rural high priority corridors on the National Highway System.



## Specific Ports-to-Plains Corridor Recommendations

1. **Rural Connectivity/Freight/Border Infrastructure/Highway Safety** -- It is important to ensure that the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, the Heartland Expressway and the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway are eligible for funding under these programs, including any pilot initiatives developed under these programs, especially with respect to freight.



2. **Permitting Pilot Program** -- One of the key challenges facing transporters of the heavy equipment used in the energy industry is permitting oversized loads. They must frequently cross multiple jurisdictions, with varying regulations on size and weight, and requiring multiple permits.

We recommend a pilot program to provide uniform size and weight restrictions and streamlined permitting throughout the corridor to find a more efficient way to move these important products.



*Picture sequence above is a wind turbine blade being transported around the courthouse in Boise City, Oklahoma*

3. **NHS High Priority Corridors** -- We support the continued designation of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor (#38), the Heartland Expressway (#14), and the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway (#58) as High Priority Corridors on the National Highway System. We also support an expanded designation for the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway.
4. **High Priority Projects** -- If Congress includes high priority projects in the new surface transportation legislation, then we support funding for individual projects along these three corridors.
5. **Ports-to-Plains Transportation Center** -- We also support the creation of the Ports-to-Plains University Transportation Center at Texas Tech University. We propose to use the existing transportation, wind energy and other programs at Texas Tech University as a platform for developing an integrated approach to initiate economic growth within the Ports-to-Plains region through the provision of enhanced transportation capacity and connectivity.



# OUR ASSETS



PORTS-TO-PLAINS  
ALLIANCE



Theodore Roosevelt  
EXPRESSWAY

- Through partners, we are **three Congressionally-designated, north-south High Priority Corridors**, comprising 2333 miles of highway, 14% of total U.S. GDP (\$1.7 trillion), and 38.5 million citizens
- **A major U.S. trading region** generating \$166.7 billion in trade with Canada and Mexico, nearly 20% of total U.S.-North America trade
- **9 of the top 10 U.S. states** for wind energy potential and generating over 5185MW, nearly 45% of the U.S. total
- **8 of the top 10** oil producing states
- **Alberta** has the **world's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest** recoverable oil reserves
- **5 of the top 6** natural gas producing states
- **Nearly 25% of U.S. ethanol refining capacity**, with 33 existing refineries and more underway
- **North America's agricultural heartland**, producing \$44.3 billion of agricultural goods, or 25% of the U.S. total; 6 of the top 10 farm states; Canada and Mexico are the top two export markets for U.S. farm products
- **Accidents will be significantly reduced** on current two-lane segments of the corridor when they are upgraded to four-lane-divided highway. Rural roads are dangerous and improving them saves lives. Each year, more than 42,000 Americans are killed and nearly 3 million are injured on our nation's roadways. The total economic cost of these crashes exceeds \$230 billion annually. Unfortunately, nearly 60 percent of highway fatalities typically occur on two-lane rural roads. When adjusted for vehicle miles traveled, according to the GAO, some rural roads have a fatality rate over six times greater than urban interstates. These facts are extremely troubling since only 40 percent of all vehicle miles are traveled on two-lane rural roads.

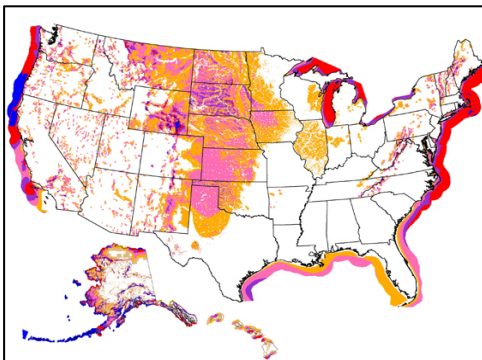


# PORTS-TO-PLAINS CORRIDOR NOT JUST A HIGHWAY

## Ports-to-Plains: North America's Energy Corridor

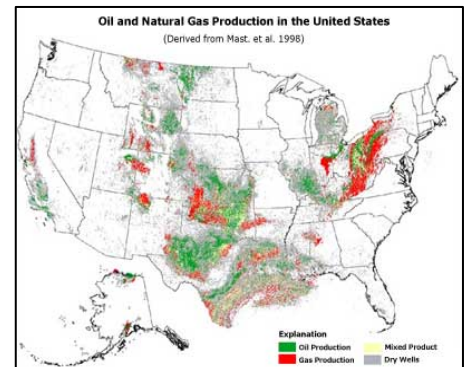
*"The most important energy corridor on the planet is no longer the Persian Gulf. It runs from the oil sands, Fort McMurray to Port Arthur, Texas." - Montana Governor Brian Schweitzer*

### THE PORTS-TO-PLAINS REGION *North America's Energy Heartland*



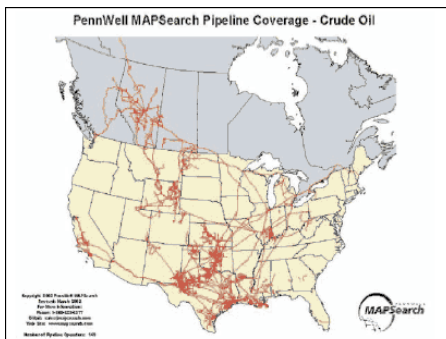
#### 9 of America's Top 10 Wind States

Source:  
U.S. Department of Energy



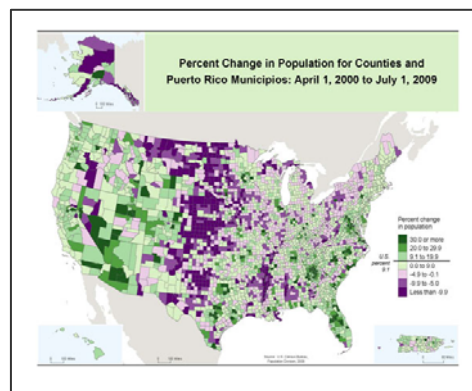
#### America's Top Oil and Gas States

Source:  
U.S. Department of Energy



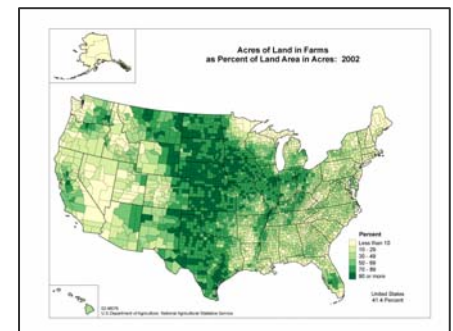
#### Primary Pipeline Corridor for North America's Oil

Source:  
PennWell MapSearch



#### Percent Population Change 2000-2009

Source:  
U.S. Census Bureau



#### America's Agricultural Heartland

Source:  
U.S. Department of Agriculture



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## PORTS-TO-PLAINS ALLIANCE MISSION STATEMENT

Ports-to-Plains is a grassroots alliance of communities and businesses whose mission is to advocate for a robust transportation infrastructure to promote economic security and prosperity throughout North America's energy and agricultural heartland.

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