

Response to Written Question Submitted by Hon. Dan
Sullivan to Jeffrey Rosen

Question. The public transportation needs of Alaska, like everywhere else, far exceed resources. Federal Transit Administration urbanized area formula funds for Anchorage for this year and last year are held up, creating strains that increase by the day. The Alaska Railroad has asked FTA for an administrative solution that will allow these funds to flow again. Under this solution, the funds would flow to Anchorage's two FTA recipients, the Alaska Railroad and the Municipality of Anchorage, the way they always have, and this would change only if the Alaska Railroad and the Municipality of Anchorage agree to a change.

It is my understanding that FTA made a prior determination that it lacked the authority to direct the allocation of the funds, absent agreement of the two parties. I have written to the Secretary requesting that DOT review the authority to allocate funds between the parties. Otherwise, this may become a matter of who blinks first and Congress certainly did not intend that brinksmanship would drive how these funds are split. A fair default method may be exactly what is needed for the parties to ultimately have a true meeting of the minds over a better long-term approach.

If confirmed, will you please review the authority of FTA to determine an allocation between the parties and consider the suggested solution presented by the Railroad as a way to get FTA formula funds flowing again for public transportation in Alaska?

Answer. Yes. I have been told that the suballocation of FTA urbanized area formula funds between recipients that are within the same urbanized area, such as Anchorage and the Alaska Railroad, is a local decision based on a determination of local need. If I am confirmed, I will review the Department's past activities related to this issue and whether the Department has authority that may help resolve the apparent impasse.