

NEWS



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 18, 2025

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Asphalt Pavement Industry Leaders Advance Road Construction Policies with Transportation Secretary Duffy

GREENBELT, MD—U.S. Secretary for Transportation Sean Duffy welcomed construction and transportation industry trade groups to U.S. Department of Transportation headquarters July 17 for a closed-door, policy-focused roundtable on shared highway reauthorization priorities. Deputy Secretary Steven Bradbury and Special Advisor and nominee for Federal Highway Administrator Sean McMaster accompanied the Secretary in the meeting.

As President & CEO of the National Asphalt Pavement Association (NAPA), the sole national organization representing the asphalt pavement industry, Audrey Copeland, PhD, PE, was invited to offer the industry's input and perspectives on USDOT priorities.

The roundtable preceded a public meeting Thursday afternoon in which Duffy laid out the agency's goals and engaged state DOTs. Thursday's events followed a similar closed-door meeting last month between NAPA and Secretary Duffy.

"What we want to do is collaborate with all of you on four key pillars," Duffy said in the public event called 'America Is Building Again.' "We want to enhance safety, accelerate project delivery...increase opportunity, and we have to strengthen our partnerships."

"The push for safety, innovation, and efficiency – from all sides – bodes well for the asphalt pavement industry," said Copeland. "Our shared interests reflect NAPA's strategic plan and our longstanding investments in pavement engineering, health and safety, and advocacy."

"We know there are great opportunities to advance key industry policies like enhancing work zone safety, expanding deployment of RAP mixtures for cost savings, and encouraging contractor innovations throughout the project delivery process to boost value and speed of construction," Copeland added.

"NAPA is proud to lead on these issues, especially as they align with USDOT priorities, and we are excited to work with Secretary Duffy and his team in the months and years ahead."

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Duffy and Bradbury emphasized the Transportation Department's mantra to get back to basics. According to Duffy, that means formula funding because it's "the most efficient way to get the money to the states" and permitting reform to enable projects to move faster.

Also speaking at the public event, House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO), promised a bipartisan surface infrastructure reauthorization bill, already in development with 11,000 requests from stakeholders.

Additionally, the agency and Congress are issuing an RFI – or request for ideas, as Bradbury put it – published at Highways.DOT.gov/RFI-Surface-Transportation-Reauth.pdf. NAPA will share its priorities, as it did during Congress's stakeholder feedback process, and industry is invited to submit its own ideas at Regulations.gov.

Graves added an important note, mirroring his remarks to attendees of NAPA's 2025 Annual Meeting on an issue NAPA has long supported: "We have to fix the Highway Trust Fund." In addition to increasing its efficiency, "EVs are simply not paying for the use of the road."

Fixing the Highway Trust Fund, or HTF, is an issue NAPA has long led on. In the past year, NAPA has played a stronger role in advocating for solutions to ensure HTF's financial solvency.

"Our priorities leading up to the next surface transportation reauthorization are down to earth and absolutely attainable," NAPA Vice President for Government Affairs Nile Elam said.

"They include expanding investment and federal policy to ensure a safe work environment for road crews, enshrining Buy America exemptions to protect the construction material supply chain in all corners of the United States, and streamlining federal policy including permitting reform to enable the roadbuilding industry to deliver the roads and bridges that are the backbone of this country.

"But every one of those priorities relies on fixing the Highway Trust Fund," Elam underscored.

"NAPA testified before the T&I Committee this spring on having all users contribute to the HTF. As Congressman Graves pointed out, ensuring EV owners pay their fair share is one significant way to increase revenue to the HTF for the first time in 30 years."

McMaster closed the public event by offering comments that align with NAPA's priorities and promising increased stakeholder engagement to develop and deploy projects that serve taxpayers efficiently. "The goal is to empower state DOTs to manage their own projects and remove red tape while also cutting unnecessary delays and costs."

Asphalt pavement is used to surface more than 94 percent of the nation's roadways and is the country's most recycled product, saving state DOTs more than \$4.5 billion annually. As such, NAPA will continue collaborating with USDOT to enable rapid deployment, particularly of time- and cost-saving measures such as innovative technologies, project execution, and recycled materials.

About NAPA

Founded in 1955, the National Asphalt Pavement Association (AsphaltPavement.org) is the only trade association that exclusively represents the interests of the asphalt pavement material producer/contractor on the national level with Congress, government agencies, and other national trade and business organizations. NAPA supports an active research program designed to improve the quality of asphalt pavements and paving techniques used in the construction of roadways, parking lots, airports, and environmental and recreational facilities. NAPA provides technical, educational, and marketing materials and information to its members and supplies product information to users and specifiers of paving materials.