

105TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1725

To establish a regional investments for national growth program to identify and fund the metropolitan regional transportation projects that are essential to the national economy, but exceed State and regional financial capacity.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 22, 1997

Mr. FRANKS of New Jersey introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

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## A BILL

To establish a regional investments for national growth program to identify and fund the metropolitan regional transportation projects that are essential to the national economy, but exceed State and regional financial capacity.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Regional Investments  
5 for National Growth Act of 1997”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—



1           (1) the economic infrastructure of metropolitan  
2 regions assists businesses in those regions in provid-  
3 ing quality goods and services at a low cost;

4           (2) maintaining and improving the economic in-  
5 frastructure of metropolitan regions is essential for  
6 the success of the Nation in the world economy; and

7           (3) building efficient transportation links within  
8 and between metropolitan regions is critical to that  
9 economic infrastructure.

10 **SEC. 3. REGIONAL INVESTMENTS FOR NATIONAL GROWTH**  
11 **PROGRAM.**

12           (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary of Transpor-  
13 tation shall establish a regional investments for national  
14 growth program (hereinafter in this section referred to as  
15 the “RING program”) for the purpose of identifying and  
16 funding large multi-State and regional transportation  
17 projects that are essential to the global competitiveness  
18 of the United States.

19           (b) **ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.**—

20           (1) **IN GENERAL.**—Regional transportation in-  
21 frastructure investments that include participation  
22 by two or more States or public authorities rep-  
23 resenting two or more States, or improve access to  
24 international commerce centers such as ports, com-  
25 mercial aviation facilities, and major rail terminals,

1 and meets the requirements of paragraph (2), shall  
2 be eligible for funding under the RING program.

3 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—In order to be eligible for  
4 funding under the RING program, a project shall—

5 (A) support the economic growth of the  
6 Nation through improved movement of people  
7 and goods;

8 (B) improve intermodal connections by in-  
9 creasing access to ports, airports, rail terminals,  
10 distribution centers, or other passenger or  
11 freight rail hubs;

12 (C) address capacity constraints that ham-  
13 per the movement of people and goods between  
14 States or metropolitan regions;

15 (D) contribute to the global competitive-  
16 ness of the United States; and

17 (E) not be currently funded for construc-  
18 tion.

19 (c) SELECTION PROCESS.—

20 (1) SOLICITATION OF PROPOSALS.—Within 6  
21 months of the date of the enactment of this Act, the  
22 Secretary of Transportation shall solicit proposals  
23 for projects to be carried out under the RING pro-  
24 gram. Any State, multi-State region, or multi-State  
25 agency may submit a proposal.

1           (2) RECOMMENDED PROJECTS.—Within 2 years  
2 of such date of enactment, the Secretary shall trans-  
3 mit a report to Congress recommending eligible  
4 projects.

5           (3) FINAL PROPOSALS.—Within 1 year of the  
6 date of issuance of the report under paragraph (2),  
7 sponsors of those projects recommended as eligible  
8 shall submit a final proposal to the Secretary.

9           (4) RANKING OF PROJECTS.—Within 6 months  
10 of receiving final proposals, the Secretary shall  
11 transmit a report to Congress ranking the projects  
12 in priority order.

13          (d) SELECTION CRITERIA.—In considering projects  
14 for inclusion in the report required by subsection (c)(2),  
15 the Secretary shall consider the following criteria:

16               (1) Time savings for both goods and peo-  
17 ple.

18               (2) Volume of goods and number of users  
19 affected.

20               (3) Reduction in costs of goods movement.

21               (4) Relief the project provides to capacity  
22 limitations of existing infrastructure.

23               (5) Benefits for multi-State facilities and  
24 operations.

1                   (6) Promotion of efficient multi-modal  
2                   usage.

3                   (7) Level of State, local, and regional fi-  
4                   nancial support for the project.

5                   (8) Private sector funding opportunities.

6           (e) FUNDING ELIGIBILITY.—

7                   (1) PROJECT PROPOSAL FUNDING.—Those  
8                   projects included by the Secretary in the report re-  
9                   quired by subsection (c)(2) shall be eligible to receive  
10                  project proposal funding under the RING program.

11                  (2) DESIGN AND ENGINEERING FUNDING.—  
12                  Those projects included by the Secretary in the re-  
13                  port required by subsection (c)(4) shall be eligible to  
14                  receive design and engineering funding under the  
15                  RING program.

16           (f) REIMBURSEMENT FOR PLANNING AND DESIGN.—  
17           Projects included by the Secretary in the report required  
18           by subsection (c)(2) shall also be eligible for reimburse-  
19           ment of funds for planning and design which have been  
20           expended prior to the issuance of such report.

21           (g) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the eli-  
22           gible costs of a project under the RING program shall not  
23           exceed 75 percent.

24           (h) RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER LAWS.—All projects  
25           receiving assistance under this section shall comply with

1 other laws governing transportation projects and pro-  
2 grams, including the National Environmental Policy Act  
3 of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

4 (i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
5 are authorized to be appropriated out of the Highway  
6 Trust Fund (other than the Mass Transit Account) such  
7 sums as may be necessary to carry out this section.

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