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conservancy

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Contact: Patricia Brooks, patricia@matchmapmedia.com, 202.351.1757

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy Applauds Release of USDOT Greenhouse Gas Rule to Track Progress on Transportation Emissions

Developing measurement standards will show impact of non-polluting travel options like walking and biking on reducing climate emissions

WASHINGTON—Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC) joins thousands of people across the country in applauding the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) for finalizing and releasing a long-anticipated greenhouse gas rule.

The rule will unify a hodgepodge of incomplete data from across the country into a unified standard, so states, regional planners and the federal government can make informed decisions about which transportation projects to invest taxpayer dollars in to reduce climate emissions. According to federal officials, USDOT is making resources available to help states implement the rule.

“This common-sense rule is an appropriate, and necessary step forward to address transportation emissions. When states and regions know the emissions impact of their transportation choices, they can make better informed decisions about options like walking, biking and transit that will cut emissions,” said Kevin Mills, RTC’s vice president of policy. “We applaud USDOT for taking this action and advancing this rule. The overwhelming number of comments in favor of the rule show that it is both popular and necessary.”

More than 100,000 comments were submitted in favor of the rule, including 15,000 from RTC’s members. Comments in favor of the rule outweighed those opposed by more than 3,000 to 1, illustrating the importance the public and local and regional agencies are placing on accountability and measurement standards.

In addition to public comments, supporting comments came from 16 Metropolitan Planning Organizations, 18 states and the District of Columbia, and over 80 national, state and local non-profit organizations. RTC is [on the record](#) as supporting this rule previously: “Sustainable transportation infrastructure—including trail and active transportation networks—has an important, central role to play in these efforts, and investment in these modes is imperative to reach our climate goals.” Learn more about the rule [here](#).

The transportation sector is the largest contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. With record amounts of federal funds flowing to states thanks to the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), advocates say there is no time to waste to ensure that the projects being built reduce harmful carbon emissions, rather than increase them. The Georgetown Climate Center summed up the stakes in a recent issue brief: “IIJA could be an important part of the U.S. response to climate change. Or it could lead to more greenhouse gas pollution than the trajectory we are currently on. Where the actual outcome falls within that range will depend on the decisions made by state, federal, regional, and local governments about how to spend the money made available by IIJA.”

Rails-to-Trails Conservancy is the nation’s largest trails organization—with a grassroots community more than 1 million strong—dedicated to building a nation connected by trails, reimagining public spaces to create safe ways for everyone to walk, bike and be active outdoors. Connect with RTC at railstotrails.org and @railstotrails on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).