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Subject: Department of Transportation seeks public input on Rail Port program
Date: Wednesday, May 12, 2010 2:21:41 PM

To: Rail Advisory Committee, Iowa League of Cities, Iowa Association of Counties, MPO Directors, RPA Directors, County Engineers and City Engineers

From: Roselyn McKie Wazny, Rail Development Manager

The Iowa Department of Transportation is seeking public input on the newly enacted Rail Port program. The Iowa General Assembly appropriated \$7.5 million dollars to the Department for the Rail Port development program. The program is designed to bring new wind energy manufacturers to the state by assisting in the development of the unique rail infrastructure needed by this industry. It is funded through an allocation from state bonding authorized by Revenue Bonds Capital II Fund (RBCII). The Transportation Commission plans to operate the program through the existing program structure of the Railroad Revolving Loan and Grant (RRLG) program. Comments are due to the Office of Rail Transportation by close of business on May 26, 2010.

The specifics of the Rail Port program are outlined in Senate File 2389. (Legislation at: <http://coolice.legis.state.ia.us/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=billinfo&Service=Billbook&menu=false&ga=83&hbill=SF2389>).

Grants will be awarded to cities or counties. The threshold criteria is included in SF 2389 and each project must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be located in or adjacent to a rail industrial park.
- Be a facility that serves multiple industrial clients with one rail infrastructure investment.
- Accommodate building and loading a complete unit train in the rail port.
- Have connection tracks with adequate clearances to transport large components.
- Be located in an area with short unimpeded access for oversized wind components to a divided four-lane highway.

An additional threshold criteria, as required by the RRLG program, is that the applicant must demonstrate that at least a 50% match of rail port costs is secured.

Additional program requirements noted in the legislation include the following

provisions:

- (1) a grant awarded for a project can not exceed more than forty percent (or \$3M) of the \$7.5 million appropriated for the program; and
- (2) priority in the awarding of grants will be given to communities that have experienced exceptional economic setbacks with an additional preference given to a project in a county that lost nine percent of its workforce to a permanent factory closing where the laid off workers are trade adjustment assistance eligible.

The Department is seeking public input on the following project selection criteria.

Project Readiness: Up to 40 points

Information to be provided: Status of engineering (complete or in progress), support by serving railroad, status of right-of-way (controlled or acquired), zoning in place; completeness of overall financial package; percentage of financial match over 50% of total rail cost

Economic Impacts: Up to 40 points

Information to be provided: Confirmed industrial prospects, marketing plan developed, available workforce, demonstrated benefits or synergy with existing rail port industries

Area economic conditions: Up to 20 points

Information to be provided: Areas with exceptional economic setbacks such as plant closures or announced plant closures; unemployment rates exceeding the state average

Preference points: Up to 5 points For a county that has lost 9% of its workforce to a permanent factory closing where the laid off workers are trade adjustment assistance eligible

Please submit comments by 4:30 p.m. on May 26, 2010 to:
johanna.turner@dot.iowa.gov and roselyn.wazny@dot.iowa.gov.

For questions concerning the proposed program, please contact Roselyn Wazny at roselyn.wazny@dot.iowa.gov or by phone: 515-239-1066.