AMENDMENT TO RULES

COMMITTEE PRINT 117–8

OFFERED BY MR. PENCE OF INDIANA

At end of subtitle F of title I of division B, add the following:

SEC. 1640. RURAL OPPORTUNITIES TO USE TRANSPORTATION FOR ECONOMIC SUCCESS INITIATIVE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Transportation shall establish the Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success Initiative (hereinafter referred to as the “ROUTES Office”), to—

(1) improve analysis of rural projects applying for Department of Transportation discretionary grants, including ensuring that project costs, local resources, and the larger benefits to the American people and the economy are appropriately considered; and

(2) provide rural communities with technical assistance for meeting the Nation’s transportation infrastructure investment need in a financially sustainable manner.

(b) OBJECTIVES.—The ROUTES Office shall—
(1) collect input from knowledgeable entities and the public on the benefits of rural transportation projects, the technical and financial assistance required for constructing and operating rural transportation infrastructure and services, and barriers and opportunities to funding such rural transportation projects;

(2) evaluate data on rural transportation challenges and determining methods to align the Department of Transportation’s discretionary funding and financing opportunities with the needs of rural communities for meeting National transportation goals; and

(3) educate rural communities about applicable Department of Transportation discretionary grants, developing effective methods to evaluate rural projects in discretionary grant programs, and communicating those methods through program guidance.

(c) ROUTES COUNCIL.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish the ROUTES Council (hereinafter referred to as the “Council”) to—

(A) organize, guide, and lead the ROUTES Office; and
(B) coordinate rural-related funding programs and assistance among the modal administrations.

(2) MEMBERSHIP.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Council shall be composed of the following officers of the Department of Transportation, or their designees:

(i) The Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy.

(ii) The General Counsel.

(iii) The Chief Financial Officer and Assistant Secretary for Budget and Programs.

(iv) The Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology.

(v) The Administrators of the—

(I) Federal Aviation Administration;

(II) Federal Highway Administration;

(III) Federal Railroad Administration; and

(IV) Federal Transit Administration.
(vi) The Chief Infrastructure Funding Officer.

(vii) The Assistant Secretary of Government Affairs.

(viii) The Director of the Office of Public Affairs.

(B) CHAIR.—The Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy shall be the Chair of the Council.

(C) ADDITIONAL MEMBERS.—The Secretary of Transportation or the Chair of the Council may designate additional members to serve on the Council.

(3) ADDITIONAL MODAL INPUT.—To address issues related to safety and transport of rural commodities, the Council shall consult with the Administrators (or their designees) of the—

(A) Maritime Administration;

(B) Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation; and

(C) National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

(4) DUTIES.—Members of the Council shall—

(A) participate in all meetings and relevant Council activities and be prepared to share in-
formation relevant to rural transportation infra-
structure projects and issues;

(B) provide guidance and leadership on
rural transportation infrastructure issues and
represent the work of the Council and Depart-
ment of Transportation on such issues to exter-
nal stakeholders; and

(C) recommend initiatives to the Chair of
the Council to consider, establish, and staff any
resulting activities or working groups.

(5) MEETINGS.—The Council shall meet bi-
monthly.

(6) WORK PRODUCTS AND DELIVERABLES.—
The Council may develop work products or
deliverables to meet its goals, including—

(A) an annual report to Congress describ-
ing Council activities for the past year and ex-
pected activities for the coming year;

(B) any recommendations to enhance the
effectiveness of Department of Transportation
discretionary grant programs regarding rural
infrastructure issues; and

(C) other guides and reports for relevant
groups and the public.