

**SUBJECT: Department of Transportation Support for Implementation of Statistical Policy Directive Number 1: Fundamental Responsibilities of Federal Statistical Agencies and Recognized Statistical Units**

The Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) is the only Federal Statistical Agency or Recognized Statistical Unit within the United States Department of Transportation (DOT), as listed in the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Statistical Policy Directive Number 1 (79 FR 71610, December 2, 2014), also known as *The Trust Directive*.

*The Trust Directive* outlines the four fundamental responsibilities of BTS and other federal statistical agencies. OMB requires progress reports from each executive department on their implementation of *The Trust Directive*. Below are BTS responsibilities as listed in *The Trust Directive*, and the actions that DOT is currently taking or committed to taking to help BTS achieve these responsibilities.

**Responsibility 1: Produce and disseminate relevant and timely information**

*For example, describe how your Department facilitates collaboration across other Federal agencies and input from stakeholders in development of data production plans. Describe how publication plans reflect stakeholder needs.*

*Description of actions currently in place, basis of the actions, obstacles to full implementation of the actions, and how the obstacles are being addressed:*

- DOT prominently features BTS information in major departmental publications such as the Secretary's *Beyond Traffic: Trends and Choices through 2045* and the *National Freight Condition and Performance Report*.
- DOT expedited renewal of appointments to the Advisory Council on Transportation Statistics (ACTS) to ensure uninterrupted collaboration between ACTS members and BTS in assuring continued relevance of the Bureau's public information.
- DOT's "3E Initiative" exemplifies efforts by BTS to improve the timeliness of the Bureau's statistical products by enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of contracting, personnel, and other agency infrastructure throughout the Department.
- DOT established a task force chaired by the BTS Director to improve the timeliness of agency information through greater use of information collected for administrative purposes.

*Description of actions under development, planned basis of the action, obstacles to establishing the actions, and how the obstacles are being addressed:*

- DOT's surface transportation proposal, the GROW AMERICA Act, includes numerous provisions to expand BTS programs that will provide critical information to decisionmakers throughout the transportation community.
- DOT included additional funding for BTS in the President's 2016 budget to initiate planning for collecting data on long distance travel.

- DOT's "3E Initiative" defines organizational improvements that will streamline personnel and contracting processes that will, in turn, minimize delay in processing and disseminating statistics.

*Description of actions under consideration, obstacles to establishing the actions, and how the obstacles are being addressed:*

- DOT will adopt future BTS recommendations for use of new technology to reduce costs of data collection, and improve the timeliness and availability of transportation statistics.

### **Responsibility 2: Conduct credible and accurate statistical activities**

*For example, describe how your Department facilitates Federal statistical agency subject matter knowledge and a high level of statistical expertise. Describe how errata are identified and communicated to stakeholders.*

*Description of actions currently in place, basis of the actions, obstacles to full implementation of the actions, and how the obstacles are being addressed:*

- DOT recognizes BTS' principal responsibility for maintaining the National Spatial Data Infrastructure pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 6302 (b)(3)(B)(vii) and the National Transportation Atlas Database pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 6309.
- DOT supports BTS' initiatives to foster the subject matter expertise of current employees, as well as to recruit and retain new expertise.

*Description of actions under development, planned basis of the action, obstacles to establishing the actions, and how the obstacles are being addressed:*

- DOT will establish a Statistical Policy Council in FY 2015 to spur collaborative resolution of statistical quality issues in data programs throughout the Department. This Council will support the BTS Director's responsibilities under 49 USC 6302 to "continually improve surveys and data collection methods of the Department to improve the accuracy and utility of transportation statistics; encourage the standardization of data, data collection methods, and data management and storage technologies for data collected by the Bureau [and] the operating administrations of the Department... [and] issue guidelines for the collection of information by the Department that the Director determines necessary to develop transportation statistics and carry out modeling, economic assessment, and program assessment activities to ensure that such information is accurate, reliable, relevant, uniform, and in a form that permits systematic analysis by the Department..."
- DOT will support establishment of a Senior Leader position for a Chief Statistician in BTS to assure the quality and accuracy of departmental statistics and to work with the Scientific Integrity Officer to assure that statistics produced by the DOT are objective, credible and of high value to transportation decisionmakers.

*Description of actions under considerations, obstacles to establishing the actions, and how the obstacles are being addressed:*

- DOT will facilitate a BTS research agenda that includes developing “Big Data” applications that will enhance existing statistics, fill data gaps, and address noted stakeholder requests.
- DOT will support OST-R’s plan to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of personnel and contracting processes that will, in turn, minimize delay in processing and disseminating statistics.

**Responsibility 3: Conduct objective statistical activities.**

*For example, describe how your Department facilitates Federal statistical agency autonomy in the collection, production, and dissemination of statistical products. Describe authority of Federal statistical agencies in the hiring and training of senior executive service staff.*

*Description of actions currently in place, basis of the actions, obstacles to full implementation of the actions, and how the obstacles are being addressed:*

- The BTS Director transmits the *Transportation Statistics Annual Report* directly to the President and the Congress. BTS seeks comments – but not concurrence – from other DOT offices for the Bureau’s statistical products.
- The Secretary of Transportation appoints the BTS Director in the competitive service in accordance with 49 USC 6302(b). The BTS Director and the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology appoint the BTS Deputy Director from the competitive service. BTS has no other senior executives at the present time. As BTS has a relatively small number of career employees, the Office of the Secretary provides training and human resources services for BTS staff.

*Description of actions under development, planned basis of the action, obstacles to establishing the actions, and how the obstacles are being addressed:*

- DOT will ensure BTS can operate under the requirements of Office of Management and Budget Statistical Policy Directives. To support BTS autonomy, DOT will give the BTS Director oversight for managing its contract authority to collect, analyze, and disseminate statistical information.
- DOT recognizes BTS authorities to archive and transfer transportation knowledge for the transportation community through the National Transportation Library pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 6304.

*Description of actions under consideration, obstacles to establishing the actions, and how the obstacles are being addressed:*

- BTS’ oversight of the information technology required to collect, produce, and disseminate objective statistics might be compromised by the implementation of the Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act (see 44 USC 3506 *et. seq.*), which establishes overlapping authorities between federal statistical agencies and departmental Chief Information Officers. DOT will fully support OMB’s implementation guidance (under development) to resolve the overlapping authorities.

**Responsibility 4: Protect the trust of information providers by ensuring the confidentiality and exclusive statistical use of their responses.**

*For example, describe how your Department facilitates Federal statistical agency compliance with Federal information security management requirements. Describe authority of Federal statistical agencies in decisions regarding the physical and information systems security under which these statistics are prepared. Consider both policy and technical controls.*

*Description of actions currently in place, basis of the actions, obstacles to full implementation of the actions, and how the obstacles are being addressed:*

- BTS follows the requirements of the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (Public Law 107–347), for example for the Bureau’s Confidential Close Calls Reporting System. The Bureau’s largest data collection program, the Commodity Flow Survey, is conducted as part of the Economic Census under the confidentiality protection auspices of the Census Bureau.

*Description of actions under development, planned basis of the action, obstacles to establishing the actions, and how the obstacles are being addressed:*

- DOT will continue to support secure computer systems for BTS’ confidential data.

*Description of actions under considerations, obstacles to establishing the actions, and how the obstacles are being addressed:*

- DOT will support BTS’ decisions regarding the security issues relating to the physical and virtual IT systems under which statistics and statistical products are collected, prepared and disseminated.