Section 130 Program Overview

Project Prioritization

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SECTION 130 PROGRAM

• Federal funds provide $220,000,000 annually for the “elimination of hazards” at public railway-highway grade crossings

• Section 130 funds are set-aside from a State’s Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) funds.

• Minimum of $1.1 Million to each State (Texas received the most in FY 2014 with $17.5 Million)
Funding and Eligibility

• Federal Share is typically 90% for Section 130 funds, States pay 10% of the project costs
  – Certain safety projects can be funded at 100% Federal share, including grade crossing closures and traffic control/signalization, according to 23 USC 120(c)(1)

• Section 130 funds can **NOT** be used for:
  – Pedestrian trespassing away from a grade crossing such as fencing along a railroad right-of-way
  – Private Crossings
Background / History

• 1987 – Surface Transportation Act created Section 130 of Chapter 23 of the United States Code for public crossings with $160,000,000 for public crossings. 598 fatalities at public crossings.

• 2005 – SAFTEA-LU authorizes $220 million for Section 130. 327 fatalities at public crossings.

• 2012 – MAP-21 continues Section 130 Program at $220 million per year.
# Roles - FHWA and FRA related to railway-highway crossing safety

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<th>FHWA</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Oversees and administers the Section 130 program with State DOTs</strong></td>
<td>Regulates grade crossing and trespassing safety issues with railroads</td>
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<td><strong>Oversees public grade crossings and grade separation safety issues, regulates the public road agency</strong></td>
<td>Oversees public and private grade crossing and grade separation issues, regulates the railroad</td>
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<td><strong>Publishes the MUTCD Section 8</strong></td>
<td>Oversees the national crossing inventory</td>
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<td><strong>Publishes the Grade Crossing Handbook</strong></td>
<td>Oversees quiet zone issues</td>
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Safety Trend

Trend of railway-highway grade crossing fatalities and incidents

- Fatalities at railway highway grade crossings
- Incidents per million train miles

Year:

Number of Fatalities at railway highway grade crossings
0 200 400 600 800 1000 1200

Incidents per million train miles
0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20
Project Selection and Prioritization

- States must use a data-driven process to prioritize and select projects (HSIP).
- States must develop a survey and schedule of projects per 23 USC 130(d).
- Most States have a simplified Hazard Index (HI) Formula that only takes into account the exposure at a crossing (The “NH Hazard Index”).
Project Selection and Prioritization

New Hampshire HI Formula:

\[ HI = (V) \times (T) \times (P_f) \]

- \( V \) = Vehicle Traffic
- \( T \) = Train Traffic
- \( P_f \) = Protection factor based on the type of protected devices

Does not factor in issues like sight distance, adjacent intersections, school buses, etc.
Project Selection and Prioritization

- A few States use more complex formulas to take into account those factors:
  - New Jersey Transit uses 24 factors in a formula
  - California uses an Excel spreadsheet with various formulas
- Not many States (if any) are using benefit-cost ratios
Challenges of prioritizing projects include:

- Actual crash data at railroad crossings can take on a random nature (for instance no fatalities for a few years and then a multiple fatalities in a single year)
- Most railroads are privately owned so data such as number of trains, or access to the right-of-way for site-visits, can be limited
- A lot of high-priority sites are on locally-owned roads (off the State-system)
Project Selection and Prioritization

Questions and discussions

• How do other countries fund and regulate crossing safety?
• How do States and other countries prioritize and select projects?
Additional Information

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