

# CLOSING SESSION

## Plenary I: THE NEW FEDERAL AUTHORIZATION: will our federal partners come through?

**Moderator: Stephanie Kopelousos**  
Florida Department of Transportation

**Panel:**  
**Kathy Dedrick**  
United States Senate Environment and Public  
Works Committee

**Ruth VanMark**  
United States Senate Environment  
and Public Works Committee

**Jim Kolb**  
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

**Jim Tymon**  
House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

**Kathy Dedrick** provided an overview of the process and anticipated schedule for enactment of the new surface transportation legislation in the U.S. Senate. She said the process is still in the early stages and that the approach is that it's regarded as a new authorization rather than a re-authorization. Two challenges: the budget shortfall in 2009 and a new administration with a new staff.

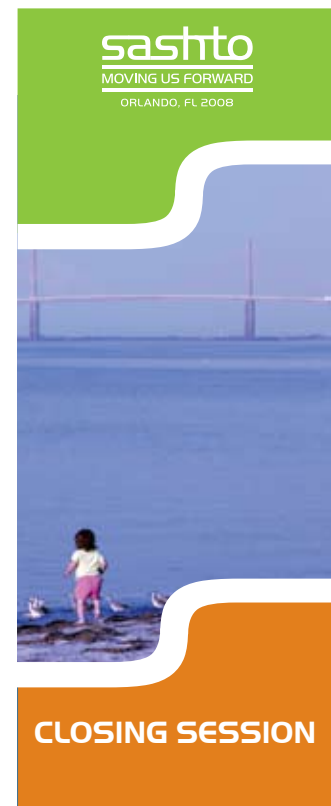
**Ruth VanMark** outlined key issues that will need to be resolved before new legislation can be passed. She said this is the first time that transportation ran out of money. We have an opportunity to determine how to move the country forward – such as a comprehensive approach to highway dollars and to structure the funding that makes sense. She acknowledged that trust fund receipts are getting fewer and we need to look at alternative funding possibilities.

**Jim Kolb** provided his perspective on the reauthorization process. He stated that

there's an erosion of purchasing power, we need a national strategy for future funding, and in 2010 we need to have a redefined program for a performance-based and accountable system.

**Jim Tymon** commented on how states and others can best get involved in the authorization process. He stated that there's a need for a more strategic approach to funding, tearing down stovepipes of funding and becoming more comprehensive. There's a big effort underway to get the authorization bill finalized in a timely manner. He encouraged early relationships with the states' congressional delegations and staff members. Ideas can then be handled more quickly to lay the groundwork early.

There was a rich discussion from the audience on topics such as the status of congressional earmarks, bridge inspections and project funding, U.S. DOT's role in the future and the expansion of toll facilities.



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