

Kentucky On Her Mind: DOT Secretary Elaine Chao Has Spent More Taxpayer Money In Kentucky Than Her Predecessors

Research By:



CHAO'S PREFERENCE FOR KENTUCKY

SUMMARY: In August of 2018, Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao (2017 to present) [touted](#) her work to bring federal dollars back to Kentucky, stating: "I try not to come empty handed." Chao's record helps make her point. Under her leadership, the U.S Department of Transportation (DOT) put a major maritime office in Paducah, KY, town of about 25,000 residents. They've also spent significantly more money on Kentucky-based contractors and projects compared to previous years.

Chao To Kentucky: "I Try Not To Come Empty Handed."

August 24, 2018: Elaine Chao Appeared At An Event In Lexington, KY To Announce \$2.3 Million In Grants For Their Transit Authority. "The U.S. Department of Transportation has announced a \$2.3 million grant for the Transit Authority of Lexington so the city can purchase new electric buses. U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao made the announcement during a Greater Lexington Chamber of Commerce event Friday." [WKYT, [08/24/18](#)]

- **Chao: "I Try Not To Come Empty Handed."** TRANSCRIPT: CHAO: "I am so pleased to report to you that Lextrans will be receiving \$2.3 million through the US Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration program of low or no emission grants. This \$2.3 million will be used to purchase electric cars and electric buses and charging stations which was serviced the city of Lexington and also Fayette County. [APPLAUSE] **I try not to come empty handed.**" [Commerce Lexington Inc. Policy Luncheon – Elaine Chao Remarks, [8/24/18](#)]

Under Chao's Leadership, The DOT Chose To Put A Maritime Gateway Office In Paducah, KY, The Only Small Town To Feature Such An Office In The U.S.

DURING ELAINE CHAO'S TENURE, THE U.S. DOT ELECTED TO OPEN A MARITIME GATEWAY OFFICE IN PADUCAH, KENTUCKY

August 23, 2018: Chao Appeared In Paducah Kentucky To Promote Three DOT Investments In Kentucky Maritime Infrastructure Totalling At Least \$1.3 Million. "Remarks Prepared for Delivery by U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao MARAD Gateway Announcement Paducah, Kentucky Thursday, August 23, 2018...I am always so happy to be back home in Kentucky...Today, I am here to highlight three more investments the U. S. Department of Transportation is making to help Paducah and Kentucky maintain their important position in the inland waterways industry: 1) As mentioned, establishing the new Inland Waterways Gateway Office in Paducah; 2) A \$251,927 Marine Highway grant for the Paducah-McCracken Riverport Container-on-Barge Service; and 3) A recent \$1.125 million Small Shipyard Grant to the Walker Boat Yard to support the purchase of a Manitowoc 180-ton Crawler Crane." [Department of Transportation – Remarks Prepared for Delivery by U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao MARAD Gateway Announcement Paducah, [8/23/18](#)]

PADUCAH, KY HAS OVER 250,000 FEWER RESIDENTS THAN THE NEXT SMALLEST LOCALITY WITH A US DOT MARITIME GATEWAY OFFICE

Most Recent U.S. Census Put Paducah's Population At 25,024 Within A County Of 65,565 Residents.

“According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2010 Paducah had a population of 25,024. The 2012 estimate is 25,048. McCracken County had a population of 65,565 reported in the 2010 Census.” [City of Paducah – Paducah Demographics, Accessed [12/8/18](#)]

- **Next Smallest Locality To Have A Maritime Gateway Office Was St. Louis, Population 319,294.** As of the 2010 Census, St. Louis “had 319,294 people.” [St. Louis Post Dispatch, [3/22/18](#)]

National Map Of Maritime Gateway Offices:



[MARAD, Accessed [12/8/18](#)]

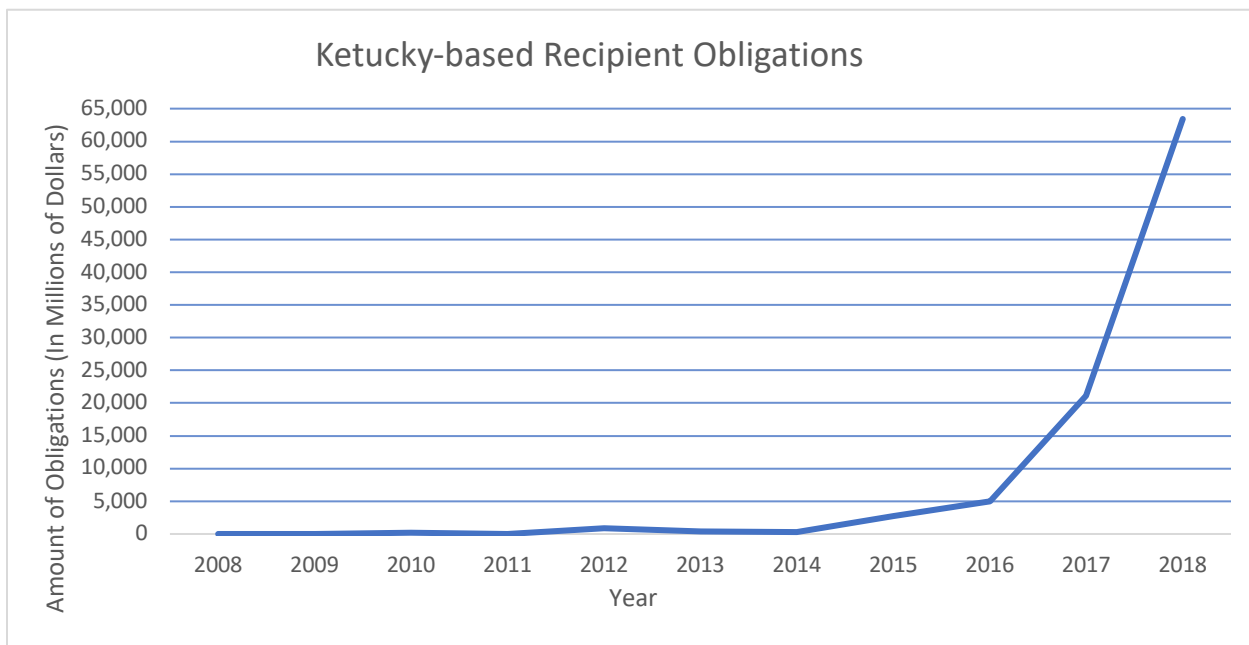
As Transportation Secretary, Chao Spent More On KY Than Predecessors

OVERALL NUMBERS

Under Chao, More DOT Money Was Allocated To Kentucky-Based Contractors Than Before She Took Office.

The value of contracts going to Kentucky contractors jumped more than 421 percent during Chao's first year as Secretary of Transportation compared to the year before Chao took over. By 2018, the value of contracts paid to Kentucky based contractors had jumped twelve times, a 1,262 percent increase compared to the final year before Chao took over. Details can be found in the below tables:

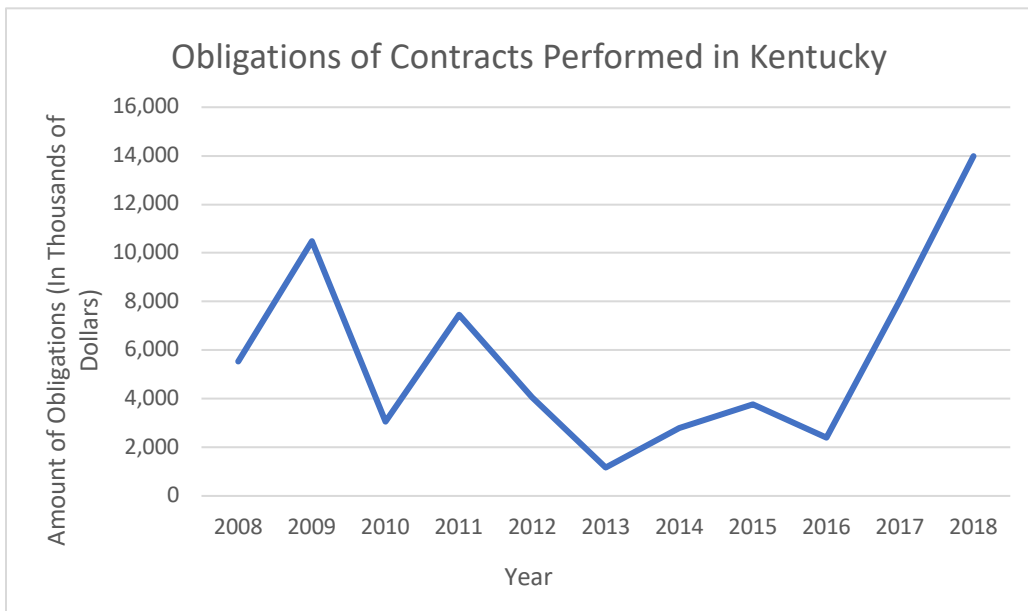
YEAR	TOTAL OBLIGATIONS OF KENTUCKY-BASED CONTRACTORS
2008	\$0
2009	\$17,760.00
2010	\$206,559.20
2011	\$0
2012	\$904,677.89
2013	\$362,134.48
2014	\$322,901.10
2015	\$2,761,939.65
2016	\$5,021,670.27
2017	\$21,172,469.99
2018	\$63,391,991.19
TOTAL	\$94,262,103.77



Under Chao, More DOT Money Was Allocated To Contracts Performed Within Kentucky Than Before She Took Office. In 2018, the Department of Transportation spent nearly \$14 million on projects located in Kentucky. This is an over \$11 million increase from the final year of the Obama Administration, and more than \$3 million more than any other point in the last decade. Details can be found in the below tables:

YEAR	TOTAL OBLIGATIONS OF CONTRACTS PERFORMED IN KENTUCKY
2008	\$5,543,989.31
2009	\$10,479,575.91
2010	\$3,057,596.67

2011	\$7,463,595.87
2012	\$4,062,191.92
2013	\$1,168,326.05
2014	\$2,800,570.25
2015	\$3,761,375.75
2016	\$2,398,256.78
2017	\$8,060,936.59
2018	\$13,986,378.56
TOTAL	\$62,782,793.66



Under Chao, There Was A Higher Number Of Kentucky-Based Contractors Than Before She Took Office. The number of Kentucky based contractors jumped more than 185 percent during her first year as Secretary of Transportation compared to the prior year. By 2018, the number of Kentucky based contractors had more than doubled compared to the final year before Chao took over. Details can be found in the below table:

YEAR	NUMBER OF KENTUCKY-BASED CONTRACTORS
2008	0
2009	1
2010	1
2011	0
2012	9
2013	4
2014	9
2015	23
2016	42
2017	78

2018	92
TOTAL	259

Under Chao, There Was A Higher Number Of Contracts Performed In Kentucky Than Before She Took Office. The number of contracts performed in Kentucky jumped 220-percent, from 2016 to 2017, and from 2016 to 2018, 353-percent. Details can be found in the below table:

YEAR	NUMBER OF CONTRACTS PERFORMED IN KENTUCKY
2008	33
2009	70
2010	45
2011	53
2012	33
2013	23
2014	22
2015	17
2016	15
2017	48
2018	68
TOTAL	427

NOTE: All data in the above section was taken from the Federal Procurement Data System Next Generation. The database is maintained by the federal government and an official source of data on United States government spending. Please inquire for search strands and methodology. [Federal Procurement Data System Next Generation, Accessed [10/17/18](#)]

EXAMPLES OF TRANSPORTATION GRANTS TO KY

\$67.5 Million Grant In Florence, KY

August 24, 2018: Chao Appeared At An Event In Florence, KY To Award A \$67.5 Million Highway Construction Grant On Interstates 71 And 75 To The State Of Kentucky. “The top federal transportation official will be in Florence today to award a \$67.5 million grant to the state of Kentucky and Boone County to replace two Interstate 71/75 interchanges. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao will announce funding for a project that will replace two interchanges at KY338/Richwood Road and KY536/Mount Zion Road in Boone County.” [Business Courier, [8/24/18](#)]

Multimillion Dollar Highway Project In Louisville, KY

December 22, 2017: Elaine Chao Appeared In Louisville, KY To Kick Off Construction On The New Dixie Highway Project. “Louisville, Ky., kicked off construction for the New Dixie Highway project Dec. 22 with an event featuring Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao.” [Transportation Monitor Worldwide, 12/28/17]

- **Dixie Highway Project Was Funded In Part By A \$16.9 Million Federal TIGER Grant.** “The city of Louisville, Kentucky, recently launched the New Dixie Highway Project, a \$22 million project funded by a \$16.9 million federal Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) discretionary grant as well as \$600,000 from the city and other federal grants.” [Transportation Monitor Worldwide, 12/28/17]

Chao Said She Was “Delighted” To Be Part Of The Project. “I have spent a lot of time driving Dixie Highway and am delighted to be part of this effort to improve the safety and efficiency of the city’s busiest traffic corridor, U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao said. As a fellow Kentuckian and Louisvillian, I am so delighted that the U. S. Department of Transportation is able to contribute in such a vital way to improving the quality of life for the community that I love. 2017 Global Data Point.” [Transportation Monitor Worldwide, 12/28/17]

\$700,000 Federal Grant In Owensboro, KY

May 3, 2018: Chao Appeared At The Owensboro Chamber Of Commerce Rooster Booster Breakfast In Owensboro, KY. “The transportation needs of the country can’t be met by the federal government alone, U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao told the Greater Owensboro Chamber of Commerce’s Rooster Booster Breakfast on Thursday. To meet all the needs of the country’s aging transportation system, she told those meeting in the Owensboro Convention Center, the government needs to work with investors in a public-private partnership.” [The Messenger, 5/6/18]

- **During The Event, Chao Said That Owensboro “Will Be Getting A \$700,000 Federal Grant To Replace Aging City Buses.** [The Messenger, 5/6/18]

\$36 Million For KY Air Travel

September 2018: Chao Announced \$1.7 Million In FAA Funding For The Bluegrass Regional Airport. “The Federal Aviation Administration has awarded \$1.7 million in supplemental funding to the Blue Grass Airport for airport infrastructure grants, U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao announced.” [Lex18, [9/28/18](#)]

September 2018: Chao Announced \$21.9 Million In FAA Funding For The International Standiford Field Airport In Louisville, KY. “U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao has announced the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will award \$586 million in airport infrastructure grants, as part of the total \$3.18 billion in Airport Improvement Program (AIP) funding for airports across the United States...Louisville International-Standiford Field Airport in Louisville, Ky., \$21.9 million This grant funds multiple projects to include repairs to runway and taxiway pavements and lighting systems, aprons and concrete shoulders, and airfield guidance sign fixtures.” [Construction Equipment Guide, [9/13/18](#)]

August 24, 2018: Chao Appeared At An Event In Kentucky To Announce A \$7 Million Grant For The Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Airport. “U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Secretary Elaine L. Chao

was joined today by Kentucky Secretary of Transportation Greg Thomas, Congressman Thomas Massie, and Boone County Judge Executive Gary Moore to announce \$75 million in infrastructure grants, including both Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) and Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grants, for the Northern Kentucky region...The more-than \$7 million AIP grant will be used for three projects at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky Airport, one of the fifty busiest, and fastest growing, airports in the country. The projects include rehabilitation of the apron at Concourse A, constructing a de-icing pad and facilities, and improving the baggage handling system at Concourse A.” [Department of Transportation – Press Release, [8/24/18](#)]

FY 2018: FAA Awarded Bowling Green-Warren County Regional Airport A \$1,474,076 Grant In Bowling Green, KY. [Federal Aviation Administration – FAA Airport Improvement Program Grant Detail Report, [9/12/18](#)]

FY 2018: FAA Awarded Stuart Powell Field A \$150,000 Grant In Danville, KY. [Federal Aviation Administration – FAA Airport Improvement Program Grant Detail Report, [9/12/18](#)]

FY 2018: FAA Awarded Samuels Field A \$150,000 Grant In Bardstown, KY. [Federal Aviation Administration – FAA Airport Improvement Program Grant Detail Report, [9/12/18](#)]

September 8, 2017: Elaine Chao Announced A \$4.3 Million FAA Grant To Benefit The Cincinnati/Northern KY International Airport. “U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao today announced the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will award \$318.1 million in airport infrastructure grants to 78 airports in 34 states across the United States as part of the FAA’s Airport Improvement Program (AIP)... Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport in Hebron, KY, \$4.3 million - the funds will be used to repair the commercial apron and the aircraft fuel hydrants.” [Federal Aviation Administration – Press Release, [9/8/17](#)]

Kentucky Bus and Bus Facility Projects

FY 2017: Federal Transit Administration Awards Nearly \$8 Million In Grants To KY For Bus And Bus Facilities Projects. [Federal Transit Administration – Fiscal Year 2017 Bus and Bus Facilities Projects, Accessed [12/8/18](#)]

- **KY Transportation Cabinet Received \$3.6 Million To Help Rural Transit Agencies.** “The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet will receive funding to purchase expansion and replacement vehicles for rural transit agencies throughout the state. The new buses will allow the rural transit agencies to enhance service, improve safety and bring fleets into a state of good repair.” [Federal Transit Administration – Fiscal Year 2017 Bus and Bus Facilities Projects, Accessed [12/8/18](#)]
- **Transit Authority Of River City (Louisville) Received \$3.6 Million To Upgrade Its Bus Fleet.** [Federal Transit Administration – Fiscal Year 2017 Bus and Bus Facilities Projects, Accessed [12/8/18](#)]
- **The City of Owensboro Received \$677,406 To Fund Replacements And Upgrades To The City’s Bus Fleet.** [Federal Transit Administration – Fiscal Year 2017 Bus and Bus Facilities Projects, Accessed [12/8/18](#)]

FY 2018: The Federal Transit Administration Awards \$7 Million In Grants To Kentucky For Bus And Bus Facilities Projects. [Federal Transit Administration – Fiscal Year 2017 Bus and Bus Facilities Projects, Accessed [12/8/18](#)]

KY Transportation Cabinet Received \$7 Million To Help Rural Transit Agencies. “The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet will receive funding on behalf of transit agencies in rural areas throughout the state. The funding will be used to replace vehicles, expand fleets, construct and renovate bus facilities, and purchase bus equipment.” [Federal Transit Administration – Fiscal Year 2017 Bus and Bus Facilities Projects, Accessed [12/8/18](#)]

Miscellaneous Grants For Other Kentucky Transportation Projects.

March 9, 2018: DOT Announced A Nearly \$8 Million Grant To The City Of Frankfort, Kentucky. “The U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT) today announced the list of 41 recipients of nearly \$500 million in discretionary grant funding for road, transit, maritime and rail projects through the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program... Frankfort Second Street Corridor Project, City of Frankfort, Kentucky, \$7,990,000 – to reconstruct the Second Street corridor, including Second Street and East Main Street, into a complete street with wider sidewalks, improved signaling and intersection improvements, ADA accessibility, streetscape enhancements, bike lanes, and green infrastructure improvements.” [Department of Transportation Press Release, [3/9/18](#)]

October 6, 2017: DOT Awarded \$385,235 To The State Of Kentucky For Hazardous Materials Training. “WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation’s (DOT) Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration’s (PHMSA) today announced it is issuing three separate hazardous materials training related grants totaling \$23,870,045. The grants are part of PHMSA’s comprehensive approach to improving the safe transportation of hazardous materials across the country... Kentucky \$ 385,235” [Department of Transportation – Press Release, [10/6/17](#)]

March 20, 2017: DOT Announced \$1.9 Million In Small Business Research Grants And One Of The Recipients Was A Kentucky Business. “Washington – The U.S. Department of Transportation announced today that fourteen (14) U.S. Small Businesses will receive a total of \$1,958,373.00 in Small Business Innovative Research Program (SBIR) awards. Each year, the SBIR program taps into the power of small businesses to develop cutting-edge solutions to some of U.S. DOT’s most pressing challenges... Awardees include small businesses from Massachusetts, California, Georgia, Maryland, New York, Kentucky, Michigan, New Hampshire, Virginia and Texas.” [Department of Transportation – Press Release, [3/20/17](#)]

April 7, 2017: DOT Announced \$1.1 Million In Funds For Emergency Repairs To Roads And Bridges In Kentucky.



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.@SecElaineChao approves \$1.1M for emergency repairs to #Kentucky's roads and bridges. @KYTC

 **U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao Approves Rele...**
WASHINGTON – U.S. Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao today approved the release of \$768.2 million for emergency repair work to roads and bridges damaged by storms or catastrophic
transportation.gov

11:18 AM - 7 Apr 2017

[Twitter – @USDOT, [4/7/17](#)]