

§ 80.13

assessment from a nationally recognized credit rating agency that provides a preliminary indication of the project's overall creditworthiness and that specifically addresses the potential of the project's senior debt obligations (those obligations having a lien senior to that of the TIFIA credit instrument on the pledged security) to achieve an investment-grade rating.

(b) The full funding of a secured (direct) loan, loan guarantee, or line of credit shall be contingent on the assignment of an investment-grade rating by a nationally recognized bond rating agency to all project obligations that have a lien senior to that of the Federal credit instrument on the pledged security.

(c) Neither the preliminary rating opinion letter nor the formal credit rating should reflect the effect of bond insurance, unless that insurance provides credit enhancement that secures the TIFIA obligation.

(d) The project sponsor must annually provide, at no cost to the Federal Government, ongoing credit evaluations of the project and related debt obligations, including an annual assessment of the TIFIA credit instrument. The evaluations are to be performed by a nationally recognized credit rating agency and provided to the DOT throughout the life of the TIFIA credit instrument. In addition, the project sponsor will furnish the DOT with any other credit surveillance reports on the TIFIA-assisted project as soon as they are available.

[64 FR 29750, June 2, 1999, as amended at 65 FR 44939, July 19, 2000]

§ 80.13 Threshold criteria.

(a) To be eligible to receive Federal credit assistance under this part, a project shall meet the following five threshold criteria:

(1) The project shall be consistent with the State transportation plan, if located in a metropolitan area shall be included in that area's metropolitan transportation plan, and shall appear in an approved State transportation improvement program before the DOT and the project sponsor execute a term sheet or credit agreement that results in the obligation of funds;

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(2) The State, local servicer, or other entity undertaking the project shall submit a project application to the Secretary of Transportation;

(3) A project shall have eligible project costs that are reasonably anticipated to equal or exceed the lesser of \$100 million or 50 percent of the amount of Federal-aid highway funds apportioned for the most recently completed fiscal year to the State in which the project is located (in the case of a project principally involving the installation of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), eligible project costs shall be reasonably anticipated to equal or exceed \$30 million);

(4) Project financing shall be repayable, in whole or in part, from tolls, user fees or other dedicated revenue sources; and

(5) In the case of a project that is undertaken by an entity that is not a State or local government or an agency or instrumentality of a State or local government, the project that the entity is undertaking shall be included in the State transportation plan and an approved State Transportation Improvement Program as provided in paragraph (a)(1) of this section.

(b) With respect to paragraph (a)(3) of this section, for a project located in more than one State, the minimum cost threshold size shall be the lesser of \$100 million or 50 percent of the amount of Federal-aid highway funds apportioned for the most recently completed fiscal year to the participating State that receives the least amount of such funds.

(c) With respect to paragraph (a)(4) of this section, the Secretary may accept general obligation pledges or general corporate promissory pledges and will determine the acceptability of other pledges and forms of collateral as dedicated revenue sources on a case-by-case basis. The Secretary shall not accept a pledge of Federal funds, regardless of source, as security for the TIFIA credit instrument.

§ 80.15 Selection criteria.

(a) The Secretary shall assign weights as indicated to the following eight selection criteria in evaluating and selecting among eligible projects to receive credit assistance: