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LEGISLATIVE Alert

AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION



December 22, 2010

Congress Approves Short-Term Continuing Resolution to Fund Federal Programs through March 4, 2011 – Extension of SAFETEA-LU Included

Yesterday, the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives approved the Continuing Appropriations and Surface Transportation Extensions Act of 2011, a continuing resolution (CR) to fund federal programs, including programs administered by the Department of Transportation and the Transportation Security Administration, at Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 levels through March 4, 2011. The bill also includes an extension of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) through March 4, 2011. The previous extension of SAFETEA-LU was set to expire on December 31, 2010. This is the sixth extension of SAFETEA-LU since the original authorization expired on September 30, 2009. Incoming Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman John Mica (R-FL) has indicated that the drafting of a new, long term authorization bill will be a top priority when Congress returns in January.

This legislation replaced earlier attempts to fund federal programs through the end of FY 2011. This latest bill, combined with earlier CRs, now makes five months of FY 2011 funding available to transit programs, or approximately 42.5 percent of the full FY 2010 amount. Traditionally, this level has been sufficient for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to release a partial-year apportionment notice to make a portion of the formula funds for FY 2011 available to transit agencies. It is not clear, however, whether the FTA or Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) will make funds available for discretionary programs, such as Bus and Bus Facilities grants, High Speed Rail grants, or National Infrastructure Investments (TIGER) until the new Congress completes a full appropriations bill for FY 2011 early next year. APTA has written to the FTA urging the release of a partial-year apportionment for formula funds as soon as possible. To view the letter, [click here](#).

The short-term CR will give the new 112th Congress, which will be sworn-in in January, the opportunity to complete the Appropriations process for FY 2011. Many Congressional leaders, particularly within the new Republican majority in the House, have indicated they will attempt to reduce the overall level of federal spending for FY 2011 to help reduce the federal budget deficit. **APTA members should contact their U.S. Senators and Representatives by early January to urge them to preserve the level of spending for the federal transit and high speed and intercity passenger rail programs as they work to complete the appropriations bills for 2011 early next year.**

The 111th Congress is expected to wrap up its remaining legislative business this week. The swearing-in of the 112th Congress will take place on Wednesday, January 5.

For questions or additional information, please contact Paul Dean of APTA's Government Affairs Department at (202) 496-4887 or pdean@apta.com.



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