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LEGISLATIVE Alert

AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION



March 3, 2010

Short-term Extension Approved For Transit and Highway Programs

The U.S. Senate last night approved H.R. 4691, the “Temporary Extension Act of 2010,” and President Obama signed the bill into law later in the evening. The law provides an extension of authorizing law for federal transit and highway programs until March 28. The Federal Transit Administration program can immediately resume processing grants, and employees of the Federal Highway Administration can return to work.

The Senate approved the temporary extension by a vote of 78 to 19 after Senator Jim Bunning (R-KY) agreed to end his objection to the bill in exchange for a vote on an amendment to offset spending under the temporary measure by reducing other government spending. The vote on that amendment failed 53 to 43.

With a temporary extension enacted, Congress can begin working again to complete an extension of transportation programs through December 31. The House and Senate are expected to modify the extension contained in the Senate-passed jobs bill (HIRE Act, Senate amendment to H.R. 2847) in order to enact a compromise between House and Senate leaders related to the distribution of discretionary highway funds under the extension and to possibly address offsets for non-transportation spending. A modified jobs bill could be considered by the House and Senate in the coming days or the transportation extension could be added to another legislative package. The Senate this week will be debating a package of House-passed tax credit extensions which includes the alternative fuel tax credit for transit systems.

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