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LEGISLATIVE Alert

AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION



March 18, 2010

HIRE Act Signed Into Law, Future Jobs Legislation Pending

Today, President Barack Obama signed the Hiring Incentives to Restore Employment Act (HIRE) (H.R. 2847, also referred to as a “jobs bill,” which includes an extension of authorizing law for federal transit and highway programs through December 31, 2010. The U.S. Senate passed the bill on Wednesday with a bipartisan vote of 68 – 29 with 11 Republicans voting for the measure.

Another key provision in the HIRE Act is the transfer of \$19.5 billion of general funds from the Treasury into the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), including \$4.8 billion into the Mass Transit Account. These funds are based on the restoration of interest payments on balances to the HTF and ensure the solvency of the Mass Transit Account through the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2011. The HIRE Act also expands the Building America Bonds program, originally created by the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA), which subsidizes municipalities issuing taxable debt by reimbursing the issuer directly for a percentage of the interest payments. This program has helped states and local governments borrow at lower costs to finance infrastructure projects and create jobs.

In addition to the HIRE Act, on March 10 the Senate voted 62-36 to pass H.R. 4213, the \$140 billion tax extenders bill which includes an extension of the alternative fuels tax credit. The House is expected to either vote on the Senate bill as passed, or to seek a conference on the bill. The House had passed an earlier version that included the alternative fuel credit. If passed, the tax credit would be applied retroactively to January 1, 2010. The extenders legislation, also touted as a “jobs bill,” does not include direct investment in infrastructure.

APTA is urging Congress to pass further jobs legislation that includes additional public transportation investment, including emergency operating assistance. APTA members have identified more than \$15 billion in public transportation projects that could provide many needed American jobs and crucial operating funding for financially strapped public transportation systems that have been affected by the recession.

APTA Legislative Conference Highlights Need for Long-Term Authorization

With more than 700 participants APTA's 35th Annual Legislative Conference was a great success. Attendees heard from U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, Federal Transit Administration Administrator Peter Rogoff, Federal Railroad Administration Administrator Joseph Szabo and several Congressional leaders. On Tuesday hundreds of APTA members went to Capitol Hill to call for more transit investment and approval of a multi-year authorization bill that would create jobs and provide a long-term federal transit program.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman Barbara Boxer (D-CA) have promised to develop a comprehensive bill this year, while House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman James Oberstar (D-MN) continues to work on the Surface Transportation Authorization Act (STAA), the committee print of a new long-term authorization bill he unveiled last year. U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood informed conference attendees that the Administration will release authorization principles this spring. It is essential that APTA members continue to press for action on a long-term authorization now that

the extension through December has been enacted.



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1666 K St., NW. Washington, DC 20006
(202) 496-4800 | www.apta.com