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LEGISLATIVE Alert

AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION



February 11, 2011

U.S. House to Act on Fiscal Year 2011 Continuing Resolution; Obama Administration Announces New High Speed Rail Program; Transportation & Infrastructure Chairman Mica to Hold Field Hearings on Authorization; Federal Transit Administration Releases Partial Year Apportionments

U.S. House of Representatives Prepares Scaled Back Fiscal Year 2011 Continuing Resolution

Next week, the U.S. House of Representatives is scheduled to consider a continuing resolution (CR) to provide funds for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2011. The current CR is set to expire on March 4. The Chairman of House Appropriations Committee, Harold Rogers (R-KY) announced that the Committee will unveil legislation to reduce spending \$100 billion below the President's Budget request for the current fiscal year. Earlier this week, the Committee released a partial list of targeted reductions that included the elimination of funds for High Speed Rail and a reduction in funds for Amtrak. However, additional proposed cuts within the federal transportation program are likely. The full legislative proposal is expected to be released by Monday, when the House will begin debate on the package. House leaders have announced that rules governing debate over the CR will allow for unlimited amendments to the package. Numerous amendments are expected to be offered to make further spending reductions, as well as to restore funding for specific programs. The rule governing the bill will require amendments that propose to restore funding to be offset from reductions elsewhere within the proposed budget. House leaders hope to expect to complete the legislation by the end of next week.

Once the House completes the CR, it must then be considered by the Senate. Due to a scheduled recess the week of February 21-25, the Senate not be able to consider the bill until the first week of March. Since the Senate is not expected to enact a CR that contains spending reductions as deep as any House-passed bill, negotiations are likely to continue beyond the March 4 deadline. This would necessitate an additional short term extension until a compromise on spending levels for FY 2011 can be reached between the House, Senate and Administration.

APTA will provide additional details on the CR as they become available. APTA members should contact their House members immediately to explain the impact of reductions in the federal transit program. Please be prepared to weigh-in on proposed cuts to the transit and high-speed rail programs next week. When contacting your Representative, please make the following points:

- **Urge your Representative to oppose reductions to the federal transit and passenger rail programs in the Fiscal Year 2011 Continuing Resolution.**

- **Ask them to oppose amendments that may be offered during debate over the CR to reduce funding for transit and passenger rail programs.**
- **Explain the negative impact that reductions in federal transit program will have on your system or business.**
- **Explain how reductions in investments for transportation infrastructure will have a negative impact on the economy and cost jobs in your community.**

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

Obama Announces Plans for Robust High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program

On Tuesday, Vice President Joe Biden announced a White House proposal to provide \$53 billion over the next six years for a high-speed and intercity passenger rail network that will serve 80 percent of the U.S. population within 25 years. Vice President Biden and Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood traveled to Philadelphia to unveil the details, announcing that investments would be used for three categories of projects, including "Core Express," "Regional," and "Emerging" corridors. The proposal also establishes two separate funding accounts to ensure that existing and emerging corridor projects no longer compete against each other for funding -- the first \$8 billion would be split equally between the two new accounts and will provide funding for activities such as new construction and bringing existing systems into a state of good repair. Additional details are expected to be provided when the President unveils his budget request for fiscal year 2012 on Monday.

House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman John Mica (R-FL), and Representative Bill Shuster (R-PA), Chairman of the Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee, both longtime supporters of high speed rail, expressed concern over the Administration's proposal to distribute funding among a large number of corridor projects. Echoing comments made at a recent field hearing in New York City, Chairman Mica stated his preference for ensuring competition and targeting investment along the congested Northeast Corridor. Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John D. Rockefeller (D-WV) praised the Administration's proposal and noted the important job creation and economic growth impacts provided by investments in passenger rail. Any new spending for the High Speed Rail program would have to be approved by Congress.

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Chairman Mica Announces Locations for Authorization Field Hearings

House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica (R-FL) has announced a series of more than a dozen field hearings and round-table discussions which will be held across the country to seek input on the authorization of surface transportation law. Chairman Mica intends to solicit feedback from state and local officials as well as other transportation stakeholders to inform the writing of an authorization bill later this year. The Chairman intends to invite local Members of Congress, particularly those on the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee to co-host the events.

The hearings will kick off on Monday, February 14 in West Virginia, home state of Ranking Member Nick Jo Rahall (D-WV). The committee will also visit the following communities on this tour from February 18 through 27: the Philadelphia Metropolitan area; Scranton, Pennsylvania; Rochester, New York; Columbus, Ohio; Indianapolis, Indiana; the Chicago

Metropolitan area; Vancouver, Washington; Fresno, California; Los Angeles; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Jonesboro, Arkansas; the Memphis Metropolitan area.

The Los Angeles event will be a special joint hearing with the Senate that will be coordinated with Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman Barbara Boxer (D-CA).

Four of these are expected to be hearings with invited witnesses, while the rest will be multiple round table discussions with public participation. The committee staff has indicated that individuals interested in participating in hearings and roundtables should contact their local Congressional co-hosts. For a lists of projected hearings and Congressional hosts [click here](#). All APTA members are encouraged to attend the events in their area to the extent possible.

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FTA Releases Partial Year Apportionments

This week, the Federal Transit Administration released partial year apportionments for [Fiscal Year 2011 formula funds](#). The apportionments make approximately five-twelfths of funding available for transit formula programs for the current fiscal year. Currently, the government is operating under a continuing resolution (CR) that is set to expire March 4. A subsequent apportionment will be released making the remainder of formula funds and discretionary program funds available once Congress approves appropriations through the end of the fiscal year.

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