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LEGISLATIVE Alert

AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION



February 23, 2011

U.S. House of Representatives Passes Fiscal Year 2011 Continuing Resolution; Consideration of SAFETEA-LU Extension Expected Next Week

On Friday, February 18, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 1, a continuing resolution (CR) to fund government operations through the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2011. The legislation would reduce federal spending in FY 2011 by \$61 billion from FY 2010 enacted levels. The bill was approved by a vote of 235-189 with three Republicans voting with the entire Democratic caucus against the bill. The bill now awaits consideration in the Senate. The Senate is in recess this week, leaving few legislative days to work out a compromise solution before the expiration of the current CR on March 4. The Senate is not expected to approve the level of spending reductions contained in the House passed bill and is expected to develop its own version of an FY 2011 CR.

The House passed CR would continue funding most FTA programs, including all formula grant programs, at FY 2010 levels. However, the legislation would reduce funding for the Capital Investment Grants (New Starts and Small Starts) program by \$431 million below the FY 2010 level in FY 2011 and rescind an additional \$280 million from FY 2010. No FY 2011 funding would be provided for the Transit Investments in Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction (TIGGER) program and the \$75 million for this program from FY 2010 would also be rescinded. The CR also would not fund the \$150 million authorized for the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority for FY 2011.

The House bill, if enacted, would rescind \$3.72 billion from the high-speed rail program from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) appropriations and \$2.475 billion from funds appropriated for FY 2010. Other Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) cuts would include a \$151 million reduction in the Amtrak Capital and Debt Service account and rescind the \$50 million in FY 2010 grants for positive train control (PTC) and eliminate funding for PTC in FY 2011.

The House passed CR would also eliminate the \$600 million multimodal TIGER II grant program and rescind the entire \$600 million appropriated for this program in FY 2010.

Along with these spending cuts, the CR would eliminate funding for the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, the collaboration among the Departments of Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and the Environmental Protection Agency as well as funding for the grants that are jointly administered by the Partnership.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) announced last night that he plans to introduce a one month short-term CR so that the House and Senate have more time to reach consensus on federal spending for the remaining seven months of the fiscal year. He has instructed Senate Appropriations Chairman Daniel Inouye (D-HI) to prepare a "clean" CR that continues funding at FY 2010 levels.

Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) has stated that any bill that does not honor the spending cuts approved by the House would be unacceptable, setting up the possibility for a partial government shutdown if there is no agreement on a compromise bill by March 4.

ACTION ALERT

- APTA urges all members to contact their Senators and urge them to oppose any reductions in funding for transit and intercity passenger rail in the FY 2011 Appropriations Continuing Resolution, H.R. 1.
- Urge your Senators and Representatives to complete action on an FY 2011 appropriations bill that funds public transportation and High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail programs at no less than the FY 2010 level.
- Urge your Senators and Representatives to enact a robust, multi-year authorization bill this year.

House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Approves Extension of SAFETEA-LU Through FY 2011

On Friday, February 11, the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure marked-up and favorably reported H.R. 662, the Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2011. The legislation, if enacted by Congress, would extend the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), through September 30, 2011, the end of the current fiscal year. The legislation would authorize spending for all surface transportation programs at current levels. Consideration of the legislation as a stand-alone measure marks a departure from earlier extensions that were combined with appropriations CRs.

The current extension expires on March 4. The House plans to bring this legislation to the floor for consideration early next week, and the Senate is expected to follow suit by the end of the week.



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