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LEGISLATIVE Alert

AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION



March 4, 2011

Congress Extends SAFETEA-LU through September 30; Enacts Two-Week Continuing Resolution for Fiscal Year (FY) 2011 Appropriations

SAFETEA-LU Extended Through End of FY 2011

On Wednesday, the House passed H.R. 662, a measure to extend the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) through the end of the fiscal year by a vote of 421 - 4. The Senate took up and approved the bill by voice vote on Thursday, sending the seventh extension of SAFETEA-LU to the President's desk. The bill authorizes funding for surface transportation programs, including transit programs, at FY 2010 levels through September 30 of this year. Transportation leaders in the House and Senate have indicated that it is their hope that this longer extension will allow Congress sufficient time to enact a full six-year authorization bill later this year.

President Signs Two Week Continuing Resolution, Averting Federal Shutdown

With a looming March 4 deadline, the House and Senate passed H.J. Res 44, a short-term continuing resolution (CR) that will fund federal programs through March 18. It will also provide more time to reach a spending compromise for the remainder of the fiscal year which ends September 30. The House passed the measure by a margin of 335-91 and the Senate vote was 91-9.

The new CR reduces discretionary spending by \$4 billion below FY 2010 levels. This reduction meets demands to reduce spending by \$2 billion per week below FY 2010 levels, which would exceed the goal set by House Republicans to reduce spending by \$100 billion over the course of the year. The bill achieves these spending reduction targets by eliminating funding in FY 2011 for some of the programs the President proposed to cut in the 2012 budget request and terminating in FY 2011 some of the funding made available for earmarks in FY 2010, including \$293 million in funding that went to surface transportation earmarks under the FY 2010 transportation appropriations bill. The measure would not eliminate any 2010 earmarks and it does not target cuts on any public transportation or high speed rail programs. This current CR continues to fund all transit and rail programs at FY 2010 levels through March 18.

The House previously passed a CR that would cut \$61 billion from FY 2010 enacted levels, including significant cuts to public transportation and high-speed intercity passenger rail programs. The House is expected to renew its efforts to convince the Senate to accept the proposed cuts in this package. (To review details of this bill, please click [here](#).) However, it is unlikely the Senate will fully accept the House proposal, so negotiations could continue past the March 18 deadline. At that point, if no agreement is reached, another short term CR will be needed if a government shutdown is to be averted.

Action Alert

APTA members should contact their Representatives in the U.S. House and Senate. Explain the importance of completing a FY 2011 continuing resolution that funds transit programs for the balance of the fiscal year so that Federal Transit Administration can apportion funds and urge them not to cut funding this year. Ask them to preserve funding for high-speed intercity passenger rail. Tell them how funding cuts would impact your service or business.

Plan on making the case directly to your elected officials when you are in Washington for APTA's Legislative Conference March 13-15, and be sure to call their offices to schedule appointments during the conference if you have not already done so. To review the speakers and activities planned for APTA's Annual Legislative Conference, please click [here](#).

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