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**September 13, 2013**

### **House Appropriators Introduce Continuing Resolution**

On Wednesday, in the absence of finalized appropriations bills for Fiscal Year (FY) 2014, House Appropriations Chairman Hal Rogers (R-KY) introduced a Continuing Resolution (CR) in order to continue funding the federal government beyond the current Fiscal Year, which ends on September 30. The proposed CR would continue funding government agencies and programs at current fiscal year levels, through December 15, 2013. Should Congress fail to pass a CR by the end of the month, the federal government will shut down on October 1, 2013.

Chairman Rogers provided a statement on the CR, which read, in part: "The Continuing Resolution introduced today is simply a temporary measure to keep the lights on in government until this Congress can fulfill its duty by approving Appropriations bills for the next fiscal year. This bill is free of controversial riders, maintains current funding levels, and does not seek to change existing federal policies.

"This is not the preferred way of doing the nation's financial work – this Congress can and should be passing regular Appropriations bills that reflect the country's changing fiscal needs and realities. However, given the late date, a Continuing Resolution is necessary to stop a government-wide shut down that would halt critical government programs and services, destabilize our economy, and put the safety and well-being of our citizens at risk."

The House of Representatives is likely to bring the CR to the floor for debate and a vote sometime next week, in order to give the Senate time to do the same.

### **Commuter Tax Benefit Activists Meet in Washington**

On September 10, APTA staff, along with leaders from over a dozen other organizations and public transportation agencies participated in the "Commuter Benefits Work For Us" Capitol Hill fly-in. The *Commuter Benefits Work For Us Coalition* held twenty-nine separate meetings, with individual Member offices, Ways and Means Committee staff, and staff from the House Republican and Democratic Leadership. The Coalition urged support of H.R. 2288, The Commuter Parity Act of 2013 which would establish permanent parity between the transit/vanpool and parking portions of the transportation fringe benefit within tax law.

During the fly-in, bill sponsor, Representative Michael Grimm (R-NY) was joined by co-sponsors, Representatives Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Jim McGovern (D-MA), at a press conference outside of the U.S. Capitol where each called for passage of the bill before the year's end when current parity expires and the public transit/vanpool benefit will be cut in half.

#### **ACTION ALERT:**

APTA urges you to call your Member in the House of Representatives and ask them to serve as a co-sponsor of H.R. 2288. You can find your Member of Congress by visiting [PublicTranstation.org's Legislator Search](http://PublicTranstation.org).

### **Senate to hold hearings on Public Transportation**

The Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee announced it is holding two hearings this month on topics affecting public transportation. On September 18, the Committee is holding a hearing titled, "Implementing MAP-21's Provisions to Accelerate Project Delivery" which will look at many of the streamlining provisions that were included in MAP-21. On September 25, the EPW Committee will host a hearing examining the state of the Highway Trust Fund.

### **APTA Submits Comments to FTA on Sec. 5310**

APTA solicited comments from our members and submitted on their behalf, to the Federal Transit Administration, in response to a Proposed Circular covering Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities. The

announcement, docket No. FTA-2013-0026 [can be found here](#), while the Proposed Circular [is available here](#). This circular is a re-issuance of guidance on the administration of the transit assistance program for seniors and individuals with disabilities under 49 U.S.C. 5310, and guidance for the preparation of grant applications. APTA's final comments are here, [on our website](#).

#### **APTA Comments on Buy America Requirements**

APTA submitted comments in response to a Federal Highway Administration docket [FHWA-2013-0041](#). FHWA solicited comments in review of the continued validity of and need for FHWA's longstanding manufactured products waiver. Under this waiver, utilities have been exempt from the DOT Buy America requirements imposed upon FHWA grant recipients. APTA's comments [are available here](#).

APTA also joined a number of partners, including the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and the Edison Electric Institute, in a letter to DOT Secretary Foxx. The letter advised Secretary Foxx as to the ongoing uncertainty among transportation and utility stakeholders regarding the FHWA and FTA application of Buy America requirements to utility relocation, outlining the outstanding issues yet to be resolved, and requesting a transition period for public transportation projects, similar to the one provided by FHWA for highway projects. The letter will be posted on [APTA's Government Affairs Letters website](#) once finalized.

Finally, the Federal Transit Administration received a request for a waiver from the Buy America requirement from Charlotte, NC. The industry is waiting to see how FTA rules on the request, which will likely be indicative of how future waiver requests will be ruled.

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