



September 16, 2009

The Honorable David Obey
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-218 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey:

On behalf of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) and its 1,500 member organizations, I write to express our views on the differences between the House and Senate versions of the Fiscal Year 2010 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

When the House-Senate conference committee convenes, we urge you to support the overall funding level of \$11.066 billion for Federal Transit Administration programs, as provided by the Senate bill, and \$4 billion for High Speed Rail, as provided by the House bill. Due to the uncertain outlook for completion of a long-term comprehensive surface transportation authorization bill, it is extremely important for the near-term capital investment needs of public transportation systems nationwide that appropriations levels for programs within the Federal Transit Administration, Federal Railroad Administration and Federal Highway Administration accounts be set at the highest level possible.

Federal Transit Administration

Formula and Bus Accounts

APTA is concerned with the cuts that both the House and Senate bills make to the Bus and Bus Facilities Account and corresponding distribution mostly within the urban and non-urban formula program accounts. In its recommendations for the next surface transportation authorization law, APTA developed a proposal to distribute Bus and Bus Facilities account funds under both a discretionary and formula mechanism, but APTA's recommendations for the new authorizing law also sought to preserve the programmatic ratios of existing authorizing law of 40-40-20 between the New Starts, Rail Modernization, and Bus and Bus Facilities programs. Investment needs for bus and bus facilities, like new starts and rail modernization, exceed current resources and we urge Congress to increase investment in all of these areas.

Separately, APTA applauds the efforts within both the House and Senate bills to address the significant demand for investments aimed at energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction, demonstrated by the numerous applications under American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's (ARRA) Transit Investments for Greenhouse Gas and Energy Reduction (TIGGER) program. We encourage the conferees to support the Senate proposal for an additional \$100 million for these grants, as these funds would provide additional resources for bus fleet replacements needs.

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Capital Investment Grants

APTA strongly supports the Senate provision providing \$2,307.3 billion for New Start and Small Start projects. The demand for New Start projects continues to outpace the availability of funds under the current authorization levels. The additional \$480 million in funds provided by the Senate bill would help to address the need for additional capacity investments in the interim.

Federal Railroad Administration

High-speed and Intercity Passenger Rail

We urge conferees to support the House funding level of \$4 billion for High-speed and Intercity Passenger Rail investments. The Federal Railroad Administration announced in July that they had received 278 pre-application submissions for projects totaling more than \$103 billion in 40 states. The demand for high-speed and intercity passenger rail clearly warrants this higher level of funding to build upon the original investment provided under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

Positive Train Control

Finally, APTA urges conferees to provide the full \$50 million, as included in the Senate bill, for the authorization included in Sec. 105 of the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 [RSIA] for deployment of Positive Train Control (PTC) systems. While the House bill does allocate funding (as in previous years) for the FRA Research and Development account specific to the development of train control systems, these funds do not address the grant program authorized under RSIA for PTC development and implementation. Since initial estimates of costs pertaining to the commuter rail PTC requirement within RSIA amount to more than \$2 billion, we have urged Congress to provide more than the \$50 million authorized annually for this program.

We appreciate your support for investment in our country's public transportation infrastructure. Please have your staff contact Brian Tynan of APTA's Government Affairs Department at (202) 496-4897 or email btynan@apta.com, if you have any questions about this matter or if we can provide any further information.

Sincerely yours,



William Millar
President

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