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LEGISLATIVE Update

AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION



House and Senate Appoint Conferees to Negotiate Final Surface Transportation Authorization Bill

Last week, the House of Representatives passed a bill (H.R. 4348) authorizing another 90-day extension of transit and highway law (SAFETEA-LU) through September 30, 2012. At the time of the vote, House Republican Leadership explained that the 90-day extension was not intended to result in another short-term extension of existing law, but rather as a vehicle to get to a conference committee with the Senate, where the two chambers of Congress will negotiate a final multi-year surface transportation bill. This week, both the Senate and the House of Representatives named conferees to the committee.

The Senate named fourteen Senators to the conference committee. Barbara Boxer (D-CA) will chair the committee, and will be joined by fellow Democrats Max Baucus (MT), Jay Rockefeller (WV), Dick Durbin (IL), Tim Johnson (SD), Chuck Schumer (NY), Bill Nelson (FL) and Robert Menendez (NJ). The six Republican Senators named to the committee include: James Inhofe (OK), David Vitter (LA), Orrin Hatch (UT), Richard Shelby (AL), Kay Bailey Hutchison (TX), and John Hoeven (ND).

House Conferees were appointed to negotiate on provisions of the legislation specific to the committees on which they serve. On the House side, the relevant committees are: Transportation and Infrastructure; Energy and Commerce; Natural Resources; Science, Space and Technology; and Ways and Means. On Wednesday, April 25, 2012, the Speaker named thirty three Representatives to the conference committee. The twenty Republican Members include: John Mica (FL), Don Young (AK), John Duncan (TN), Bill Shuster (PA), Shelley Moore Capito (WV), Rick Crawford (AR), Jaime Herrera Beutler (WA), Larry Buschon (IN), Richard Hanna (NY), Steve Southerland (FL), James Lankford (OK), Reid Ribble (WI), Fred Upton (MI), Ed Whitfield (KY), Doc Hastings (WA), Rob Bishop (UT), Ralph Hall (TX), Chip Cravaack (MN), Dave Camp (MI) and Patrick Tiberi (OH). The remaining thirteen are Democrats: Nick Rahall (WV), Peter DeFazio (OR), Jerry Costello (IL), Jerrold Nadler (NY), Corrine Brown (FL), Elijah Cummings (MD), Leonard Boswell (IA), Tim Bishop (NY), Henry Waxman (CA), Ed Markey (MA), Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX), Earl Blumenauer (OR) and Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC).

The committee's first meeting is scheduled for May 8, 2012. There are a number of important issues to work out, but initial discussions will likely involve matters related to the scope of issues to be considered during the conference. One contentious provision relates to the approval of the permit for the Keystone XL pipeline that was included in the House extension.

There is optimism that this move to a conference committee on the legislation allows for continued momentum toward passage of a multi-year surface transportation authorization bill. However, the House and the Senate calendars diverge somewhat through the rest of the

calendar year, meaning their availability to meet as an entire group will be somewhat limited.

ACTION ALERT

- APTA Members with Representatives or Senators who have been appointed to the House-Senate Conference Committee should contact them and urge their support for a strong Federal commitment to public transportation in the final negotiated bill. APTA is developing a more detailed letter to conferees that will be posted on the APTA website when it is sent.

Senate Appropriations Committee Completes Consideration of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 Transportation-HUD Spending bill

Meanwhile, the yearly appropriations process has continued. The Senate Appropriations Committee quickly followed the April 17, 2012 subcommittee mark-up of the Transportation, House and Urban Development, and Related Agencies appropriations bill with a full-committee mark-up on April 19, 2012. The full-committee made appropriations based on SAFETEA-LU levels in the current extension and on the assumption that current funding levels would continue to be authorized through Fiscal Year 2013. As the new authorization law is just now entering conference committee, it is unclear how the final appropriations bill for the year will be affected. Further details on the bill will be provided next week.

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