

LEGISLATIVE ISSUE BRIEF

March 2017

FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2017 APPROPRIATIONS

Congress must approve appropriations bills every year to actually fund government programs that are authorized by legislation such as the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act. As part of that process, Congress must set an obligation limitation on authorized spending from the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) and appropriate general funds for non-trust funded programs. APTA continues to urge members of Congress to fully appropriate funds at authorized levels for transit and passenger rail accounts to spur economic growth and meet 21st century mobility needs.

In December, Congress passed a continuing funding resolution (CR) to keep the federal government operating at FY 2016 levels through April 28, 2017. While the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) was able to make partial-year apportionments of formula grants, the prorated amounts are based on FY 2016 levels rather than the higher levels authorized by the FAST Act for FY 2017. FTA remains unable to allocate discretionary grants, including Capital Investment Grants (CIG), absent full-year appropriations.

If Congress fails to finish its work on a full-year FY 2017 transportation appropriations bill, federal transit programs funded by the HTF will not receive the full funding authorized by the FAST Act. The CIG program will also lose out on increased funding. Last year, the House and Senate each passed an FY 2017 spending bill that included more CIG funding than the FY 2016 appropriated level and FY 2017 authorized level. Additionally, the \$199 million authorized for FY 2017 for installing positive train control (PTC) at commuter rail systems will be at risk absent congressional action.

The FY 2017 transportation appropriations bill should fully fund programs that already have dedicated funds backing them from the HTF, including \$199 million for PTC implementation, the Urban and Rural Formulas; Buses and Bus Facilities (including competitive grants); State of Good Repair; grants for seniors and individuals with disabilities; and the Transit Cooperative Research Program and part of the Public Transportation Innovation program.

The appropriations bill should also fund authorized General Fund programs, including CIG to advance critical new capacity and expansion projects in the pipeline; the Public Transportation Innovation and Technical Assistance and Workforce Development programs; passenger rail programs including Amtrak, the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements, and the Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair; and Restoration and Enhancement Grants.

APTA Position

- **Congress must complete a Fiscal Year 2017 transportation appropriations bill prior to the expiration of the current CR on April 28, 2017 and fully fund federal public transportation programs consistent with the levels authorized by the FAST Act.**
- **A full-year continuing resolution at FY 2016 levels will fail to accomplish this and jeopardize the one-time money (\$199 million) authorized by the FAST Act for PTC implementation.**