

LEGISLATIVE ISSUE BRIEF

March 13, 2016

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 Act (FAST) Act. 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.

First, Congress should fully fund programs that already have dedicated funds backing them from the HTF. This includes programs such as the Urban and Rural Formulas; Buses and Bus Facilities (including competitive grants); State of Good Repair; and grants for seniors and individuals with disabilities. The Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) and part of the § 5312 research program are also now Trust Fund programs.

APTA strongly urges Congress to fully fund authorized General Fund programs, including Capital Investment Grants (New Starts) and passenger rail programs. Capital Investment Grants funding is crucial to support existing full funding grant agreements and to advance new projects in the federal pipeline. Last year, Congress appropriated \$2.18 billion for Capital Investment Grants, more than the year before, but below the FAST Act authorized level of \$2.30 billion.

The FAST Act authorizations for Amtrak and High-speed, Intercity, Passenger, and Freight Rail programs are also outside of the Highway Trust Fund and are funded with annual appropriations. Congress should fully fund the FAST Act accounts for Amtrak, Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements, Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair, and Restoration and Enhancement Grants, totaling nearly \$1.9 billion in FY 2017.

Congress should also make full appropriations for other important General Fund accounts: \$20 million for General Fund authorized Transit Research, \$5 million for Technical Assistance and Standards Development, and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

APTA POSITION

- **Every \$1 invested in public transportation provides approximately \$4 in economic returns.**
- **Congress must fully fund Highway Trust Fund and General Fund programs.**
- **Congress should fund New Starts and other General Fund transit programs at the highest levels to address growing demand for public transportation across the nation.**
- **The FAST Act included a number of programmatic reforms to passenger rail programs and the new programs should be funded at the full authorized level.**