



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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TO: The Mayor

FROM: Tom Cochran, CEO and Executive Director

Working through the Thanksgiving Day holiday, House and Senate transportation negotiators reached consensus earlier this week on a conference committee agreement to renew the nation's surface transportation law, providing about \$305 billion over five years in federal funding for highway, safety, transit and rail programs.

The House of Representatives will vote early this afternoon on this agreement, "Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act" (HR 22), to be followed by Senate floor action, beginning as early as this evening and finishing no later than Tuesday, December 8. White House officials have already indicated that President Obama will sign the measure once the enrolled bill reaches his desk.

Current law expires tomorrow (December 4) at midnight, with Congress expected to extend the deadline one more time to provide enough time to enact the new law.

The conference agreement addresses a number of key Conference of Mayors priorities:

- Provides for a long-term renewal, to be fully funded over the five-year authorization period;
- Preserves the basic structures of current law, including both highway and transit spending commitments and funding flexibility;
- Renews funding commitments to the Surface Transportation Program (STP), allocating more resources to metropolitan and local areas (nearly \$3.4 billion in additional STP funding to local areas above the baseline);
- Restores the bus discretionary grant program (\$270 million in the first year, growing to \$344 million in the final year of the bill);

- Makes locally-owned bridges (not on the National Highway System but on the Federal Aid System) eligible for \$22+ billion in annual funding under the National Highway Performance Program (NHPP);
- Continues other key programs such as the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program and the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP);
- Emphasizes key policies affirming local transportation priorities, such as “Complete Streets” and incorporating NACTO’s “Urban Street Design Manual” into design standards for federally-assisted projects;
- Authorizes new freight investments, making formula funds (\$1 - \$1.5 billion annually) available to the states for freight projects as well as annual discretionary funds (\$800 million - \$1 billion annually) available to states and MPO areas;
- Incorporates a new rail title, providing about \$8 billion over five years for Amtrak; and
- Addresses other concerns, including renewal of the Ex-Im Bank, WIFIA program changes to facilitate future financing of water/wastewater projects, and extension of the deadline for compliance with Positive Train Control requirements.

Please contact your Congressional delegation to indicate your support for HR 22, and to urge prompt action and approval during House and Senate consideration.

If you have any questions, please contact Kevin McCarty, Assistant Executive Director, at [202-861-6728](tel:202-861-6728) or kmccarty@usmayors.org.

As always, thank you for your many efforts over the last couple of years to help advance this long-term surface transportation renewal.