

October 16, 2015

House Committee Presents 6-Year Surface Transportation Bill

Dear NEC Transportation Committee Member:

Earlier today, the House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee put forth its long-awaited version of a six-year surface transportation bill. Dubbed the “Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015,” this legislation is set to be introduced early next week by Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) and Ranking Committee Democrat Peter DeFazio (D-OR) as well as Highways and Transit Subcommittee Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO) and Ranking Subcommittee Member Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC). In addition, the T&I Committee is slated to hold [a markup](#) on this nearly 550-page bill next Thursday (10/22) and will look for floor action soon thereafter. According to initial reports, the bill is set to authorize a total of approximately \$325 billion over the next 6 years, with \$261 billion going to highway, bridge, and related programs; \$55 billion for transit; and about \$9 billion for highway safety programs. However, similar to the Senate, it is indicated that the House will only guarantee funding for the first three years of the bill, absent a universally agreeable means to extend funding.

The [current surface transportation law](#) expires on October 29, and while the House looks to be making progress on a long term bill, it is likely that a short-term extension will be necessary to get beyond that date. This will provide time in order to reconcile any differences between the [Senate’s already passed version](#) of a surface transportation bill and whatever bill the House ultimately passes.

For the House T&I Committee’s summary of their new legislation please read below, or you may find the summary and the actual proposed bill text by [clicking on this link](#).

*Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015 *

The Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015 is a multi-year, fiscally responsible surface transportation reauthorization bill that improves our Nation’s infrastructure, reforms our surface transportation programs, refocuses those programs on addressing national priorities, maintains a strong commitment to safety, and welcomes innovation to make the system safer and more efficient. This bill will help us spend less time stuck in traffic, facilitate

commerce and economic growth, boost our competitiveness, help create jobs, and improve our quality of life.

Improving Our Infrastructure

- Provides certainty for state and local governments to undertake large-scale, complex transportation projects;
- Provides flexibility for states to invest in bridge rehabilitation and replacement; and
- Eliminates red tape that slows down infrastructure improvements.

Reforms

- Streamlines the environmental review and permitting process to cut red tape and accelerate project delivery;
- Provides more flexibility and decision-making to states and local governments to allow them to better address their priorities and needs;
- Eliminates and consolidates offices within the Department of Transportation;
- Establishes a National Surface Transportation and Innovative Finance Bureau to provide assistance to help state, local, and private sector partners move transportation projects forward;
- Overhauls federal truck and bus safety grant programs and rulemaking processes; and
- Reforms truck and bus safety programs and eases administrative burdens on small businesses.

Refocusing on National Priorities

- Facilitates commerce and the movement of goods by establishing a Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects Program;
- Provides flexibility to states to target driver safety grants on their pressing safety needs; and
- Consolidates truck and bus safety grant programs and provides state flexibility on safety priorities.

Innovation

- Promotes private investment in our surface transportation system;
- Promotes the deployment of transportation technologies and congestion management tools that support an efficient and safe surface transportation system for all;
- Updates federal research and transportation standards development to reflect the growth of technology in transportation;
- Encourages the installation of vehicle-to-infrastructure equipment to reduce congestion and improve safety; and
- Improves truck and bus safety by accelerating the introduction of new transportation technologies.

Additional information will be provided as it is available. Please let me know if you have any questions about this legislation, or if there is any other related information that I can provide.

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