



## October 23, 2015

Yesterday, the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee unanimously approved H.R. 3763, the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015 (STRRA), as amended. The markup lasted five hours. The majority of amendments offered were withdrawn without a vote. Over 150 amendments had been filed with the Committee. The bill authorizes \$325B from the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) for highway and transit programs over six years - through FY'21. This funding level is essentially current levels plus a modest annual inflation factor. STRRA now awaits action from the full House.

At yesterday's mark-up, a manager's amendment, comprised of about 35 relatively minor amendments that were approved in advance by the bipartisan leadership of the Committee, was passed as well as seven stand-alone amendments (see link below). None made major changes to the bill. Language offered by Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA) that would increase highway and transit funding to the levels included in President Obama's \$478B GROW America Act by requiring repatriation of offshore corporate earnings was rejected on an 11-42 vote.

There is some speculation that the bill could go to the House floor as early as next week. However, the House Ways & Means Committee has not yet drafted a revenue title to identify the additional revenue needed to fully fund the bill. The House may opt to use the same \$46B in "payfors" previously identified by the Senate in its DRIVE Act that could fund the first three years of the bill. The Ways & Means Committee's efforts are in part complicated by the fact that Committee Chairman Paul Ryan (R-WI) has announced he will run in next week's election for House Speaker.

In the meantime, the current MAP-21 extension expires next week on October 29 which means another short-term extension is needed. With the House bill now moving, there is a growing desire to keep the pressure on Congress to complete a multi-year bill by making the next extension very short – perhaps only through mid-November.

Here are links to:

The [text](#) of the STRRA bill as introduced

The [text](#) of the manager's amendment and the other amendments approved at mark-up

A 14-page [summary](#) of the bill prepared by the House T&I Committee

A [table](#) displaying all the funding authorized by the bill

A [one-pager](#) comparing total funding in both the House STRRA and Senate DRIVE Acts versus the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) baseline



A [summary](#) of the bill prepared by the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA)

A [summary](#) of the bill prepared by the American Public Transportation Association (APTA)

A [letter](#) that all 19 Democratic governors sent to congressional leaders urging quick passage of a multi-year surface transportation reauthorization bill

## Other

A three-year extension of the December 31, 2015 deadline for railroads to implement anti-collision, Positive Train Control (PTC) technology is likely to come to the House floor next week as a stand-alone bill. A PTC extension is included the House STRRA bill, but that bill is unlikely to be enacted before November when most railroads and commuter rail systems must begin making decisions about whether to continue services beyond the deadline or face severe federal penalties. A similar PTC extension was included in the Senate-passed DRIVE Act. However, some Senate Democrats such as Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Richard Blumenthal (D-CT) have threatened to oppose PTC extension legislation if it comes to the Senate floor as a stand-alone bill and not as part of a multiyear surface transportation reauthorization bill. They view the urgent need to extend the PTC deadline as an important driver to keep the surface transportation bill moving.

Over the weekend while in Seattle, US DOT Secretary Foxx released the draft National Freight Strategic Plan (NFSP). The plan is now open for public comment. Here is a [link](#) to information about the plan and a [link](#) to the actual plan. According to US DOT, the NFSP aims to describe the freight transportation system and future demands on it; identify major corridors and gateways; assess physical, institutional, and financial barriers to improvement; and specify best practices for enhancing the system. The 143-page NFSP outlines six identified key trends and challenges, as well as strategies to address and meet these challenges. The plan also includes a map of a proposed Multimodal National Freight Network (MNFP) that incorporates ports, border crossings, rail lines and highways.

In addition, today US DOT released the final Primary Freight Network designation. Per MAP-21, FHWA was directed to designate a Primary Freight Network, which was defined as a highway-only network containing 27,000 centerline highway miles that are most important to carrying freight. Here is a [link](#) to the Federal Register notice and a [link](#) to the final map.