



## Washington Update

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This morning, the Senate Environment & Public Works Committee, chaired by Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), unanimously approved a six-year (FY'15 to FY'20) reauthorization of the highway title of MAP-21 by a voice vote. MAP-21 expires on September 30. The bill, S. 2322, was introduced earlier this week by the bi-partisan "Big 4" leaders of the EPW Committee. The bill only authorizes those programs, primarily highway, that fall under the jurisdiction of the EPW Committee. Today's committee action was very short and non-controversial, with no amendments offered, other than a limited Manager's amendment of provisions that had already been agreed upon by the committee leadership. The most significant change in the Manager's amendment was to lower funding for the popular TIFIA program from \$1B a year in the original draft to \$750M per year. The \$250M cut was redirected to fund portions of the highway research program.

The bill will not move to the Senate floor for consideration until the other key committees introduce and pass their pieces of the overall bill – the Banking Committee which has jurisdiction over the transit program, the Commerce Committee which has jurisdiction over highway safety, rail and some freight programs, and the all-important Finance Committee which must determine how to pay for the entire bill. The leaders of the House T&I Committee have indicated they are working on their version of the bill, but there is no date set yet for its introduction.

S. 2322 is a six-year, \$265B bill which authorizes highway and several transportation research programs at current FY'14 funding levels, plus a modest increase for inflation. With only very limited new funding to spend, the bill generally maintains the current MAP-21 programs, including the MAP-21 core highway program structure and state funding formulas. The bill does not address the gap between current funding and revenue into the Highway Trust Fund. That is the responsibility of the Senate Finance Committee which held a hearing on the issue last week, but came to no conclusions. Over \$100B is needed just to maintain the current funding levels over six years.

Here is a [link](#) to the bill text and a [link](#) to a bill summary prepared by the EPW Committee. Here is a [link](#) to a summary prepared by ARTBA.

Among other things, the bill:

- Authorizes \$38.4B for the core state highway programs in FY'15, ramping up to \$42.6B in FY'20, for an average of \$40.5B per year. This is an inflationary increase (roughly 2%) above current funding levels.



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- Adds \$6B (beginning in FY'16) for a new road-focused formula-based freight program to improve the movement of freight on the national highway freight network. We anticipate that the Commerce Committee will likely draft a more comprehensive, multi-modal freight program and that Senators may offer more expansion freight provisions when the bill comes to the floor. The bill maintains MAP-21's limited 27,000-mile cap on the Primary (Highway) Freight Network, but allows States and local governments to designate critical rural and urban corridors not otherwise included.
- Provides \$115M per year to assess highway system financing alternatives. US DOT will fund research and development to test at least three user-based revenue mechanisms. The pilot projects are intended to address implementation, interoperability, public acceptance, personal privacy, equity, compliance and administrative costs.
- Amends and expands a number of provisions in MAP-21 aimed at streamlining environmental and regulatory reviews, including tasking US DOT to create a template for programmatic agreements between agencies for handling environmental reviews across jurisdictions; aligning NEPA reviews with historic preservation requirements; and further integrating planning decisions and documents into the NEPA permitting and processes.
- Adds \$2.4B (\$400M per year) for a renewed Projects of Regional and National Significance Program with expanded eligibility for local governments, port authorities, and political divisions of states to apply for the competitive grants. The project cost threshold has been lowered from \$500M to \$350M and the funding would come from the Highway Trust Fund.
- Creates the American Transportation Awards Program to reward states and MPOs for improving performance and delivering projects ahead of schedule and under budget. The program is funded at \$125M per year.
- Does not address the issue of tolling, unlike the US DOT reauthorization proposal, the GROW AMERICA Act, which greatly expands the options for tolling, including on the Interstate.