



PB Washington Update

PREPARED BY CATHY CONNOR
MANAGER OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS



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Since Congress and the White House have not yet reached a deal on raising the federal debt limit, the House has cancelled its upcoming recess scheduled for the week of July 18. The House and the Senate currently plan to recess for the month of August on August 5.

FY'12 Appropriations

Although the House THUD (DOT) Appropriations Subcommittee was scheduled to release its FY'12 funding bill and mark it up in subcommittee on July 14, the mark-up has been postponed and not yet rescheduled. The postponement may relate to the lack of a government-wide budget/debt deal and/or the fact that the House is gaining an extra week of work time by cancelling their next week's recess.

The House has made progress on other federal agency FY'12 appropriations bills passing four of the 12 bills through the House, three through full committee and three others through subcommittee. The DOT bill will be one of the last to be considered. The Energy & Water bill is currently under debate on the House floor and there are efforts underway to protest the provision in the bill which would rescind any unobligated ARRA high speed-rail funds in order to pay for Corps of Engineers Emergency Relief projects related to the Midwest flooding.

The Senate has not yet set a schedule for consideration of any FY'12 funding bills while they wait for resolution on the overall budget issue.

Surface Transportation Reauthorization

Last week when House T&I Committee Chairman John Mica rolled out his outline for a six-year surface transportation authorization bill, he indicated that he planned to hold a hearing on the proposal on July 12, however, that hearing is not on this week's T&I Committee schedule. A number of key industry groups issued statements on the proposal. In general, the groups praised Mica for keeping the process moving and for a number of the policy recommendations, but criticized the funding levels. Here are links to several of the statements: [AASHTO](#), [ARTBA](#), [APTA](#), [US Chamber of Commerce](#), [AGC](#), [ASCE](#) and the [Highway Users Alliance](#).

Mica issued a [statement](#) yesterday criticizing attacks on his proposal by Democratic members who held their own press conference last week immediately following Mr. Mica's at which they strongly opposed the funding levels and the lack of bipartisan consultation.



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In addition to the provisions noted in the July 7 PB Interim Update, the Mica proposal makes a number of changes to the NEPA process including requiring concurrent environmental reviews by federal agencies instead of sequential ones, reducing the review time and setting deadlines for agency reviews, combining the FEIS and the ROD into one document and expanding the list of categorical exclusions from the NEPA process. Mica also proposes to permit all states to assume NEPA overview from FHWA. For the first time, Mica proposes to include maritime transportation provisions in a surface bill which would tie expenditures from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund to revenues collected resulting in an increase in funding for US Army Corps dredging projects.

It is possible that the Environment & Public Works Committee will release the highway title of the Senate surface transportation bill sometime this week. EPW Chairwoman Barbara Boxer is expected to introduce a two-year bill that would fund both highway and transit programs at about \$109B which, over two years, would be approximately equal to the current level of funding. However, there is a \$12B gap between the \$109B and the estimated Trust Fund revenues which the Senate Finance Committee is still studying how to bridge.

FAA Reauthorization

There is still no resolution to the few remaining disagreements between the House and the Senate on the multi-year FAA authorization bill. The 20th short-term extension expires on July 22. While the cancellation of the upcoming House recess buys some more time to finalize the multi-year bill, it is more and more likely that yet another extension will have to be passed, perhaps through the end of the fiscal year.

TIGER III Grants

As previously noted, US DOT published an Interim Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the FY'11 NII/TIGER III grant program in the [July 1 Federal Register](#). Comments on the draft notice are due by July 18. DOT plans to publish the final NOFA on August 1. Pre-applications are due to US DOT by October 3 and final applications will be due by October 31. US DOT will hold a free, half-day seminar on "Lessons on How to Compete for a US DOT TIGER Grant" on Monday, July 18 from 1 to 4 PM at the US DOT DC Headquarters. Advance registration is required by emailing TigerGrants@dot.gov. In addition, there will be a webcast of the session accessible at www.dot.gov/tiger.