

## Parsons Brinckerhoff Washington Update - July 21, 2015 - Interim Update

This afternoon, the Senate failed to approve a cloture motion to proceed with debate on its version of a surface transportation reauthorization bill. The vote to move forward with debate on HR 22, the DRIVE Act, which now encompasses the highway, transit, safety, rail, freight, and finance titles, required 60 "Yes" votes, but only received 41 votes. Many Democrats (and a few Republicans), including leadership, voted against cloture because they wanted more time to read and analyze the 1030-page bill. Large parts of the bill were drafted solely by the Republican majority. Senators received the full bill text only a few hours before the vote. Senate Majority Leader McConnell indicated after the vote that he would try to hold another cloture vote tomorrow. He added that the Senate may stay in session over the weekend.

The Senate bill authorizes six-years of surface transportation programs and policies, but only three years' worth of the additional revenue required to fund the full bill. The bill went from six-years of funding to three years when Senate leaders were forced to drop a plan to raise revenue through changes in the federal employees' retirement fund which faced strong opposition. Another plan to cut dividends that the Federal Reserve pays to member banks is included in the bill, but is under fire and may have to be pulled.

Here is a [link](#) to the full text of the bill (ignore the first paragraph about the Veterans Administration) – the first 12 pages are a Table of Contents of the various provisions in the bill. Here is a [link](#) to an overview of the bill.

The bill text of "Division B - Federal Public Transportation Act" (starting on page 214) is the first public information made available on the transit title which was never marked-up in committee.

Even if the Senate ultimately votes to approve HR 22, the bill would still need to be agreed to by the House which has taken a different approach – passing a short-term bill through December 18. House leaders want more time to pass an international tax reform bill this fall that could provide additional Highway Trust Fund revenues through repatriation to fund a longer bill. In addition, timing is tight to make a deal with the House on a multi-year bill because the House is scheduled to adjourn for its August recess next Friday.