

Parsons Brinckerhoff Washington Update - August 1, 2013 - Interim Update

More news about the status and outlook for the pending House and Senate FY'14 THUD Appropriations bills.

Despite Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Roger's (R-KY) comments yesterday in which he blamed budget pressure to cut domestic discretionary spending and a lack of sufficient votes as the reasons behind the House Republican leadership's decision to pull the FY'14 DOT funding bill from the House floor, this morning House Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) said that they simply ran out of time and the bill would be brought back up on the floor in September. Most industry observers tend to believe the Roger's explanation. With no support from Democrats and with a number of moderate Republicans also opposing the severe program cuts, coupled with fiscally conservative Republicans opposing the bill because they feel the cuts should go deeper, getting to 218 votes was going to be very difficult.

Boehner also said he supported a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) to keep the government funded after September 30.

In the Senate this morning, they fell short of the 60 votes (54 to 43) necessary to invoke cloture and proceed to a final vote on the Senate version of the FY'14 DOT funding bill.

Congress leaves town tomorrow for a five-week recess, so neither the House nor Senate will proceed with consideration of the DOT funding bills until they return. With only about 9 legislative days in September, US DOT and other federal programs will most likely be funded under a short-term CR. Boehner's comments in support of a CR are encouraging because the other option is a government shut-down.