

After two weeks of significant progress, things are rapidly unraveling in both the House and Senate related to the surface transportation authorization bills. House Speaker John Boehner has announced that the House will not finish HR 7, the surface transportation authorization bill, this week as they had hoped and debate on the transportation and revenue titles will not occur until after next week's recess. The House started floor debate on the oil and gas drilling title of the bill this morning and may move on to the federal pension title, but will definitely not debate the T&I and Ways & Means titles until the week of February 27. The Rules Committee has now postponed indefinitely the meeting they had scheduled for this afternoon to address the proposed amendments to the T&I and Ways & Means Committee titles, such as the Nadler-Blumenauer-LaTourette amendment to restore gas tax revenues to the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund.

There may now also be a problem with using the federal pension reform offset to pay for the \$40B General Fund transfer to fund the transit program. It appears some or all of the pension savings is needed to offset the extension of the unemployment benefits and the Medicare "doctor fix".

The House Republican leadership has decided to split their huge and controversial bill into three pieces and have separate floor votes on each piece – the transportation and revenue title HR 7, the oil and gas drilling title, and the federal pension reform title (the offset to the General Fund transfer used to fund the new Alternative Transportation Account). Assuming the three bills each pass, they would then be put back together after the fact into one massive bill. This very unusual action is being taken because House Republican leaders now fear they do not have the votes to pass the full package given potentially unanimous Democratic opposition and opposition from moderate, suburban Republicans as well as Republican fiscal hawks.

In addition, over 260 amendments have been filed with the Rules Committee -- so many that the Rules Committee was not able to address them all when they met late yesterday afternoon. Here is a [link](#) to a list of the amendments that have been submitted to the Rules Committee for consideration.

Yesterday, the Administration issued its Statement of Administration Policy (SAP) on HR 7. It states in part, "Because this bill jeopardizes safety, weakens environmental and labor protections, and fails to make the investments needed to strengthen the nation's roads, bridges, rail and transit systems, the president's senior advisers would recommend that he veto this legislation".

In the Senate, gridlock continues over the large number of non-germane amendments Senators want to offer to S. 1813. Majority Leader Harry Reid has been forced to schedule another cloture vote for Friday to try to get the Senate debate back on track.

EPW Chair Barbara Boxer has raised serious concerns about the extraneous amendments, including ones related to contraception, aid to Egypt, federal pay freeze, line-item veto, etc. Even Senator Vitter (R-LA), one of the Senate EPW "Big Four" has filed some unrelated amendments. Boxer has asked stakeholder groups to contact Senate Majority Leader McConnell and urge him to make a deal with the Republican Senators to get the bill moving.

The House and Senate floor debate will be broadcast on TV on C-Span 1 and 2. The debates are also accessible on-line at www.c-span.org.

Other News:

- Yesterday President Obama signed the four-year FAA Authorization bill into law.
- FTA has released the FY'13 Annual Report on New Starts and Small Starts. The report can be downloaded [here](#) and individual project profiles can be found [here](#). Going forward, FTA plans to update the online project profiles throughout the year when projects move from one phase to the next. A list of the projects that have either advanced in or dropped out of the pipeline can be found on pp.23-24 of the report.

FTA is recommending a total of \$2.2 billion for FY'13, with \$1.93 billion for existing and proposed Full Funding Grant Agreements (FFGAs), \$127.57 million for proposed Project Construction Grant Agreements (PCGAs), and \$120 million for other projects in the pipeline. FTA is also proposing to set aside \$56 million in FY'13 for management and oversight. All funding amounts are subject to congressional approval during the annual appropriations process. The report also contains the same proposed policy changes related to streamlining the New Starts and Small Starts programs that FTA mentioned in last year's report.