

PB Washington Update - March 8, 2012 - Interim Update

Late last night, Senate leaders reached a deal on amendments to the two-year surface transportation reauthorization bill, S. 1813, putting the bill on course for passage next Tuesday.

At 2:15 PM this afternoon the Senate will start to vote on a series of 30 amendments to S. 1813 – some germane and some non-germane. The germane amendments will require 50 votes to pass, the non-germane ones will require 60 votes. See below for the list of the amendments to be brought up. The Senate will not be in session tomorrow, so the debate will likely carry over to next Tuesday when they are back in session. The Senate debate and voting can be viewed live on TV on C-Span 2.

The deal includes votes on several controversial non-germane amendments, including a proposal to block EPA regulations on mercury emissions from industrial boilers, dueling GOP and Democratic amendments on the controversial Keystone XL pipeline, an amendment on eliminating duplicative government programs, and a proposal to crack down on offshore tax havens.

On the transportation side, amendments up for a vote deal with privatized highways, state-by-state funding formulas, Buy America, off-system bridges, tolling and gas tax flexibility.

In yet another confusing development, this morning House Speaker Boehner repeated remarks he made yesterday following the House Republican Conference meeting that he intends to bring the "Senate Bill" , or something close to it, to the House floor when the House returns from their recess on March 19 concluding that there is not enough support for a five-year bill in the House. However, following immediate negative feedback to those remarks, the Speaker's Twitter feed posted a tweet at 1:06 p.m.: "Reports of 'giving up' on House hwy bill = false. There is a better way. Hope we can seize it."

Senate Amendments:

1. Vitter #1535 (OCS) (60-vote threshold);
2. Baucus or designee regarding rural schools (60-vote threshold);
3. Collins #1660 (Boiler MACT) (60-vote threshold);
4. Coburn #1738 (OMB/Duplicative Programs) (60-vote threshold);
5. Nelson(FL)-Shelby-Landrieu #1822 (RESTORE) (60-vote threshold);
6. Wyden #1817 (Keystone pipeline) (60-vote threshold);
7. Hoeven #1537 (Keystone pipeline) (60-vote threshold);
8. Levin #1818 (Offshore Tax Havens);
9. McConnell, or designee, side-by-side to Stabenow #1812 (Energy Tax Extenders) (60-vote threshold);
10. Stabenow #1812 (Energy Tax Extenders) (60-vote threshold);
11. DeMint #1589 (repeal of energy tax subsidies) (60-vote threshold)
12. Menendez-Burr #1782 (Natural Gas) (60-vote threshold);
13. DeMint #1756 (State discretionary authority);
14. Bingaman #1759 (privatized highways)
15. Coats #1517 (Apportionment formula);
16. Brown(OH) #1819 (Buy America);
17. Blunt #1540 (Off system bridges);
18. Merkley #1653 (Farm vehicle exemptions);
19. Portman #1736 (gas tax flexibility);
20. Klobuchar #1617 (Ag transportation);

21. Corker #1785, to be modified (discretionary spending cap adjustment)
22. Shaheen #1678 (small bus systems);
23. Portman #1742 (rest areas);
24. Corker #1810 (limitation on expenditures);
25. Carper #1670 (tolls);
26. Hutchison #1568 (tolls);
27. McCain #1669 (Grand Canyon - noise abatement), as modified with the changes at the desk;
28. Alexander #1779 (over-flights of national parks).
29. Boxer #1816 (SoS emergency exemptions);
30. Paul #1556 (emergency exemptions);