

PB Washington Update - June 27, 2012 - Interim Update

Surface Transportation Authorization – Tremendous progress continues to be made on a final surface transportation authorization bill with staff, Members and some leadership working around the clock. No details about the specifics are being released and very few are being leaked. The latest goal is to file (finalize) the conference report (bill) by midnight tonight in a frantic effort to bring the conference report to the House and Senate floors for final approval before COB Friday when Congress is scheduled to leave for the July 4th recess or by midnight on Saturday when the current short-term extension expires. Under congressional rules, the House must pass the bill first before sending it over to the Senate. Many still believe that there is not enough time to logistically pass the bill by then and that a potential two-week+ mini-extension will be needed to wrap up loose ends; but others, particularly Chairman Boxer, are determined to pass it by June 30.

The latest rumors about the bill's contents are that the highly controversial Keystone Pipeline and coal ash provisions are no longer part of the bill, but the RESTORE Act related to funding for Gulf Coast restoration is in, that the Senate rail title, freight policy provisions and extension of the popular Projects of National and Regional Significance (PNRS) are likely out, that enough revenues may be found to extend the bill an extra year through FY'14 (so that it would in fact be a "two-year" bill rather than just a 15-month bill), and that the final bill may be coupled with the other "must-pass", but controversial bill, related to student loan interest rates.

FY'13 DOT Appropriations Bill – Late last night, the House completed action on the transportation portion of the FY'13 THUD appropriations bill, HR 5972. They are currently working to finish up the HUD portion of the bill before voting on final passage. Only a few transportation-related amendments were offered on the floor and most were rejected by voice vote. Many of the amendments were offered by fiscally conservative Republicans and focused on cutting funding for various DOT programs, particularly administrative expenses for several of the US DOT modes. Of concern was an amendment, ultimately defeated in a recorded vote, to cut the \$150M for DC's WMATA capital investment program.

TIGER Grants – US DOT has announced the FY'12 TIGER IV discretionary grants. Approximately \$500M went to 47 projects in 34 states and DC. Here is a [link](#) to the US DOT press release and here is a [link](#) to the full list of selected projects and project descriptions. Over 700 applications, exceeding \$10B, were submitted to US DOT for the FY'12 TIGER program. Of the \$500M, more than \$120M will go to projects in rural areas, 35% will go to road and bridge projects, 16% to transit projects, 13% to high-speed rail projects, 12% to freight rail projects, 12% to multimodal, bike and pedestrian projects, and 12% to port projects

The FY'13 Senate DOT Appropriations bill includes \$500M for another round of TIGER grants, but the House bill zeros out the TIGER program. We will not know until the FY'13 annual appropriations bill is completed later this fall whether the TIGER program is funded.