



## MARCH 1, 2010 – INTERIM REPORT

### 2,000 DOT Employees Temporarily Furloughed

This morning, US DOT issued a press release (see below) announcing that, as of midnight last night, nearly 2,000 DOT employees would be temporarily furloughed and state reimbursement of federal-aid highway expenditures (approximately \$800M per week) would be terminated until Congress passes an extension of the Highway Trust Fund/SAFETEA-LU authorization.

What is affected –

- The salaries of any US DOT staff funded by the Highway Trust Fund including FHWA, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) and some NHTSA and Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA) staff. The FTA staff is not currently affected because they are paid with General Funds, not Trust Funds.
- Federal reimbursement of state DOT expenditures on federal-aid highway projects. This does not immediately mean a work stoppage on highway projects since states pay for the work directly using state funds, however, for those states with cash flow problems, a delay in getting federal reimbursement may cause problems within a few days. Some state DOTs have opted to postpone advertising or letting bids for new projects until the impasse is resolved and other states may follow.
- FHWA approval of new projects.
- FHWA Federal Lands projects will be shut down immediately because of the furlough of federal safety inspectors – see list of projects below.
- Any pending grant approvals of FTA formula, Rail Mod and bus discretionary projects. These programs are funded through the Mass Transit Account of the Trust Fund.
- Some NHTSA safety programs, including national anti-drunk driving efforts.

What is not affected –

- Any US DOT programs, projects or staff funded with General Funds, such as FTA staff and FTA New Start and Small Start projects, and FAA programs funded through the Airport Trust Fund.
- It is possible that a skeleton staff at FHWA, paid for with already appropriated ARRA economic stimulus funds, will be able to continue making payments for ARRA-funded projects which are funded with General Funds.
- The collection of the federal gas tax and deposits of the tax into the Highway Trust Fund.

Where we go from here –

Congress has two short-term options:

1. the Senate could persuade Senator Jim Bunning (R-KY) to withdraw his objection to a Unanimous Consent (UC) Agreement which would allow the Senate to quickly pass a 30-day extension of SAFETEA-LU (and thereby the Highway Trust Fund), as well as extensions of COBRA healthcare benefits and unemployment insurance payments. The House already passed this bill late last week. Or absent Bunning's agreement, Majority Leader Reid could file a cloture



petition to cut off debate and allow a roll call vote on the 30-day bill to occur as early as Thursday.

2. the House could agree to pass the Senate-version of the "HIRE" jobs bill which includes a SAFETEA-LU extension through December 31, 2010. However, last week the House leadership did not feel they had the votes to do so because of Democratic opposition to the much smaller, more limited Senate jobs bill which does not include many of the priority provisions that House members had included in their "Jobs for Main Street Act which they passed back in December. Also, many fiscal conservatives of both parties object to the fact that the Senate bill adds to the federal deficit since it does not include any funding offsets.

The House is not back in session until tomorrow, Tuesday, and the earliest they could vote on the Senate bill under regular order is Wednesday. An earlier Tuesday vote is possible under the Suspension Calendar, but that requires a 2/3 vote which may be difficult to achieve despite House T&I Committee Chairman Jim Oberstar's recent endorsement of the Senate bill. On Friday, Oberstar agreed to support the bill despite his continued concerns about Senate changes to the distribution of previously earmarked SAFETEA-LU discretionary programs.

Either way, hopefully something will be resolved this week – although it may be only a temporary solution through March 31, which could put programs funded by the Highway Trust Fund back in jeopardy in less than a month.

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DOT 36-10  
Monday, March 1, 2010  
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## **USDOT Furloughs to Shut Down Critical Construction Projects *Secretary LaHood Denounces Political Games During Tough Economic Times***

The Department of Transportation will furlough nearly 2,000 employees without pay Monday, temporarily shutting down highway reimbursements to states worth hundreds of millions of dollars, national anti-drunk driving efforts, and multi-million dollar construction projects across the country.

The action comes as a result of Kentucky Sen. Jim Bunning's decision to block key legislation that would have extended several critical priorities for middle class families. That legislation covered tax credits for COBRA health coverage, unemployment insurance for 400,000 people, as well as the short-term extension of the Highway Trust Fund. The Fund supports all surface transportation programs for the nation – highways, bridges, transit and safety inspections, as well as efforts to encourage seat belt use and to fight distracted and impaired driving.

"As American families are struggling in tough economic times, I am keenly disappointed that political games are putting a stop to important construction projects around the country," said Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "This means that construction workers will be sent home from job sites because federal inspectors must be furloughed."

Because of the shutdown, federal inspectors will be removed from critical construction projects, forcing work to come to a halt on federal lands. Projects span the country, including the \$36 million replacement



# PB Washington Update

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of the Humpback Bridge on the George Washington Parkway in Virginia, \$15 million in bridge construction and stream rehabilitation in Coeur D'Alene, Idaho, and the \$8 million resurfacing of the Natchez Trace Parkway in Mississippi. A full list of the FHWA construction projects affected by the furlough is below.

At the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the furloughs will disrupt safety programs that operate in partnership with the states and advocacy groups, such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP). The programs are designed to reduce traffic injuries and fatalities totaling 37,000 a year in areas including distracted driving, child passenger safety and motorcycle safety. Activities affected include national media and enforcement campaigns such as "Click It or Ticket," and "Drunk Driving: Over the Limit. Under Arrest."

Assistance to consumers whose goods are held hostage by rogue moving companies will be unavailable during this period. And work addressing texting while driving for commercial truck and bus drivers, electronic on-board recorders and hours of service will also be suspended.

Employees at the Department of Transportation should report for work Monday morning as they normally would unless given specific alternate instructions. Furloughs will affect employees funded by the Highway Trust Fund at the following agencies: the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Research and Innovative Technology Administration.

Employees may find more information about the furloughs and when they will be able to return to work at [www.dot.gov](http://www.dot.gov), as well as Secretary LaHood's blog, Fast Lane, at [www.fastlane.dot.gov](http://www.fastlane.dot.gov). Information will also be available at Secretary LaHood's twitter account, [www.twitter.com/RayLaHood](http://www.twitter.com/RayLaHood), and at his facebook page, [www.facebook.com/sec.lahood](http://www.facebook.com/sec.lahood).

Federal Lands Construction Affected By Furlough		
State	Project	Cost
Alaska	Tongass National Forest road clean up	\$1,100,000
Alaska	Coffman Cove Dock construction	\$885,000
Arizona	Coronado National Monument main park entrance	\$1,500,000
Arkansas	East Fly Gap and Gunner Pool Roads landslides restoration	\$923,000
California	Sequoia National Park main entrance	\$15,000,000
California	South Fork Smith River	\$13,800,000
California	Golden Gate National Recreation Area road construction	\$8,700,000
District of Columbia	9th Street Bridge replacement	\$50,000,000
Georgia	Chickamauga & Chattanogga National Military Park construction	\$634,000
Idaho	Salmon River Road Nez Perce National Forest construction	\$20,133,000
Idaho	Little Salmon River Bridge Nez Perce National Forest intersection	\$3,800,000
Idaho	Fernan Lakes Idaho Panhandle National Forest	\$14,600,000



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Illinois	McRaven Road reconstruction	\$1,100,000
Maryland	Great Falls Park entrance road construction	\$3,100,000
Maryland	Piscataway National Park erosion and slope damage repair	\$89,000
Mississippi	Natchez Trace Parkway resurfacing	\$8,100,000
Mississippi	Natchez Trace Parkway trail construction (Ridgeland County)	5,600,000
Mississippi	Vicksburg National Military Park road rehabilitation and resurfacing	\$5,000,000
Mississippi	Natchez Trace Parkway trail construction (Madison County)	\$4,700,000
New Mexico	Carlsbad Caverns National Monument roadway rehabilitation	\$9,000,000
North Carolina	Newfound Gap road rehabilitation	\$9,900,000
North Carolina	Blue Ridge Parkway reconstruction and resurfacing	\$6,000,000
North Carolina	Goshen Creek Bridge replacement	\$3,000,000
Ohio	Fitzwater Road bridges replacement	\$4,400,000
Oregon	Beaver Creek Road Ochoco National Forest	\$6,200,000
South Carolina	Ft. Sumter Historic Site entrance road and parking area rehabilitation	\$262,000
Tennessee	Cades Cove Loop Road rehabilitation	\$6,700,000
Tennessee	Shilo National Park tour roads and parking area rehabilitation	\$3,000,000
Tennessee	Catossa Wildlife Management Area bridge replacement	\$1,000,000
Utah	Bear River Access Road	\$13,800,000
Virginia/DC	George Washington Parkway Humpback Bridge replacement	\$36,000,000
Virginia	Blue Ridge Parkway reconstruction and resurfacing	\$12,000,000
Virginia	Petersburg Park tour road relocation	\$1,500,000
Puerto Rico	Vieques National Wildlife Refuge road and bridge reconstruction	\$6,000,000
Puerto Rico	El Yunque National Forest slide repair	\$3,000,000
U.S. Virgin Islands	Christiansted Bypass construction	\$14,000,000
U.S. Virgin Islands	Centerline Road reconstruction	\$9,000,000
U.S. Virgin Islands	St. John roundabout construction	\$7,200,000
U.S. Virgin Islands	Long Bay Road reconstruction	\$5,500,000
U.S. Virgin Islands	University of Virgin Island sidewalk construction	\$988,000
U.S. Virgin Islands	North Shore Road reconstruction	\$448,000