



PB Washington Update

PREPARED BY CATHY CONNOR
MANAGER OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS



JULY 30, 2009 – INTERIM REPORT

Yesterday, the Senate THUD (DOT) Appropriations Subcommittee marked-up and approved its version of the FY'10 DOT appropriations bill. The full committee will act on the bill today at 3:00 pm. I do not yet have any information on project earmarks. The total highway program is funded at \$42.5B (versus \$41.1B in the House) and the transit program is funded at \$11.1B (versus \$10.5B in the House), with the FTA New Starts program receiving an additional \$480M over the \$1.82B in the House bill. FAA AIP grants receive \$3.5B, the same as in the House bill. The high-speed rail program only receives \$1.2B versus the \$4B in the House bill. The Administration had requested \$1B for high-speed rail. No funds were requested for a National Infrastructure Bank. The full House voted to pass their version of the FY'10 bill (HR 3288) on July 23 by a vote of 256 to 168.

The House voted late yesterday, 363 to 68, to transfer \$7B in General Funds to the Highway Trust Fund to cover the predicted shortfall in the highway account for the remainder of FY'09. The provision was voted on as part of a larger bill (HR 3357) that also addresses the extension of unemployment benefits. The Senate is expected to take up the bill later this week or early next week before they adjourn for the August recess.

It appears now that any short-term bill to extend the current SAFETEA-LU program for another 12 or 18 months will not be debated until after the August recess because the House plans to adjourn for the recess at the end of this week (depending on how the healthcare reform bill plays out) and there isn't time to deal with the surface transportation bill until September. Three Senate committees – Commerce, Banking and Environment & Public Works – have already approved 18-month extension bills. House T&I Committee Chairman Jim Oberstar continues to push for passage this year of a comprehensive six-year bill authorization bill.