



OCTOBER 16, 2009 – INTERIM REPORT

Congress ended up working through what was supposed to have been a week-long Columbus Day recess. However, most infrastructure-related issues remain in limbo as Congress continues to focus on healthcare reform.

FY'10 Appropriations:

The vast majority of the federal government continues to operate under a one-month Continuing Resolution (CR) funded at FY'09 levels. With half the month now over, another CR will definitely be needed. The next CR will likely extend through Thanksgiving. Of the 12 agency funding bills, only the Legislative Branch, Agriculture and Energy & Water bills have been completed. The Homeland Security bill will likely pass early next week. The goal is still to try to pass the bills individually rather than rolling them into a multi-bill omnibus.

The THUD appropriations bill which funds the US Department of Transportation programs is considered to be relatively non-controversial and at one time there was hope it would be completed before the one-month CR expired. However, congressional leaders now seem to view the DOT bill as the likely legislative vehicle for the next CR. Therefore, while the staff continues to wrap up minor issues, no formal conference has been scheduled and issues, such as reconciling the \$4B in the House bill for high-speed and intercity passenger rail programs with the \$1.2B in the Senate bill, have not progressed.

FHWA recently released 31 days of Formula program apportionments to the states. Click [here](#) to see the state by state apportionments. However, no FTA funds will be apportioned under the one-month CR.

The final Energy & Water FY'10 funding bill is on its way to the White House for approval. It includes a total of \$33.5B for DOE and US Corps of Engineers' programs. The bill provides \$5.4B for the Corps which is \$43M above FY'09 and \$320M above the Administration's request. Of the total amount, \$2.4B is to address the backlog of operations and maintenance for navigation infrastructure, \$2B is included for construction projects and \$160M for investigation studies for new projects.

SAFETEA-LU Reauthorization:

A one-month extension of the now-expired SAFETEA-LU highway and transit authorization bill was included in the one-month CR (see above). While there is a lot of behind the scenes chatter, no formal action has taken place on a longer extension or a multi-year bill. The House T&I Committee continues to push for a full six-year bill, while the House recently passed a three-month extension and the White House and many in the Senate support an 18-month extension in order to push the deliberations beyond the 2010 mid-term elections. In the meantime, the \$8.7B rescission of unobligated highway contract authority required by SAFETEA-LU has gone into effect, despite various efforts to repeal it.

While many feel that it is impossible to pass a multi-year bill before the end of 2009 or even early next year, others are making yet another push to identify revenue sources and pass a bill. House T&I Committee leaders have urged industry groups to make a concerted effort to contact Republican members to ask them to support a gas tax increase. This week a key Senator and ally of President Obama, Dick Durbin (D-IL), called for a renewed effort to pass a six-year bill early next year.



PB Washington Update

PREPARED BY CATHY CONNOR
MANAGER OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS



ARRA Economic Stimulus:

There is a lot of talk about the possibility of a second stimulus bill since the unemployment numbers continue to grow. Currently most of the focus is on various forms of tax relief, however, it is possible that additional General Funds for transportation and other infrastructure programs may be under consideration. The speed and effectiveness with which the initial transportation stimulus funds have been obligated is one of the major success stories of the ARRA effort. It is possible that some level of state/local match may be required if transportation programs are included in a second stimulus since the original discretionary programs were wildly oversubscribed.

Over \$56B in requests were submitted for the \$1.5B ARRA TIGER program which is focused on large, multi-modal projects and over \$57B in requests were submitted for Track 1 and Track 2 of the \$8B high-speed and intercity passenger rail program. TIGER grants are expected to be announced in January and the rail grants sometime this winter after the first of the year.