

TRANSPORTATION WEEKLY

UPDATE – HOUSE APPROVES \$7 BILLION BAILOUT OF HIGHWAY TRUST FUND; SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE APPROVES \$75.8 BILLION FOR USDOT BUDGET IN 2010.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2009 – 4:50 P.M.

The House of Representatives has passed the bill H.R. 3357, as amended, by a roll call vote of 363 yeas to 68 nays (two-thirds being necessary).

The bill transfers \$7 billion from the general fund of the Treasury to the Highway Trust Fund to ensure the highway program's solvency through September 30 of this year. The bill also provides time-sensitive fixes for state unemployment insurance trust funds and the Federal Housing Administration.

The bill now goes to the Senate, which must pass the bill before that chamber adjourns on August 7.

In other news:

The Senate Subcommittee on Transportation and Housing Appropriations held a markup session this afternoon and approved, by voice vote, a bill providing \$75.8 billion in total gross discretionary budgetary resources for the U.S. Department of Transportation for fiscal year 2010. The full Appropriations Committee will mark up the bill tomorrow at 3 p.m.

Brief (really brief) highlights follow. Much more information to come tomorrow.

HIGHWAYS. The Senate bill gives the federal-aid highway program the full \$41.107 billion obligation limitation requested by the Obama Administration. In addition, the bill appropriates \$900 million from the general fund for additional highway formula spending and an additional \$500 million from the general fund for the TIFIA credit assistance program. Another \$165 million is appropriated from the general fund for earmarked highway projects, making the total discretionary spending in 2010 for highways \$42.67 billion.

AVIATION. The Senate bill provides a total of \$16 billion in gross spending for the Federal Aviation Administration, including the requested \$3.515 billion for the Airport Improvement Program.

TRANSIT. The Senate bill provides a total of \$10.97 billion in gross spending for the Federal Transit Administration, including \$2.307 billion for new starts and small starts (\$480 million more than the budget request), an additional \$100 million for grants to transit agencies to reduce greenhouse

gas emissions, and \$150 million for the Washington DC Metrorail system.

RAIL. The Senate bill provides \$1.2 billion for high-speed and intercity passenger rail grants, \$200 million more than the budget request but much less than the \$4 billion in the House bill. The bill also provides a total of \$1.55 billion in grants to Amtrak.

OTHER. The Senate bill provides no funding for a National Infrastructure Bank and no ability to transfer appropriated funds to such a Bank if one is created. But the bill does appropriate \$1.1 billion to the Secretary for “capital investments in surface transportation infrastructure” at the Secretary’s discretion, and a committee aide said that between the \$1.1 billion for discretionary grants and the extra \$500 million appropriation for TIFIA credit assistance, the Senate bill does most of what a National Infrastructure Bank would be able to do in its first year.