

TRANSPORTATION WEEKLY  
UPDATE - NEW CR TO DECEMBER 18; NO MOVEMENT ON SURFACE  
EXTENSION  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2009 - 11:30 A.M.

Earlier today, the House Appropriations Committee filed the conference report on the Interior-Environment appropriations bill for fiscal year 2010 (H.R. 2996). Division B of that conference report is an extension of the current stopgap continuing resolution providing appropriations for unfunded agencies and contract authority for highway and transit programs. The current CR expires at midnight on Saturday night; the new extension will run through Friday, December 18 (the Friday before Christmas week, which is considered to be the drop-dead date for Congress leaving town for the year if health care drags on).

The only transportation-related change in the new CR is a technical change to Highway Trust Fund expenditure authority in section 9504 of the Internal Revenue Code. The CR would continue providing contract authority for highway, transit and safety programs at the post-rescission FY 2009 levels through December 18.

In other news, there is still no movement on the six-month surface transportation authorization extension in the Senate, and hopes that the Senate can pass a bill by unanimous consent in the near future are waning, as there are continuing objections on the Republican side of the aisle.

The Republican Leader's office does not identify Senators who object to "hotline" requests, but other aides say that the center of opposition now appears to be Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH), the ranking Republican on the Senate Budget Committee, who may be trying to organize opposition to the proposed extension on the grounds of fiscal responsibility.

When asked for comment, Gregg's office would only refer us to a publication by the Republican staff of the Budget Committee from late yesterday. The four-page document outlines the reasons for the Republican budget staff opposition to the restoration of the \$8.7 billion rescission, transfers from the general fund to the Highway Trust Fund, and the levels of overspending out of the Trust Fund's Highway Account (all wrapped up in a series of amusing fall metaphors).

The Republican Budget Committee document can be found here:

<http://budget.senate.gov/repUBLICan/analysis/2009/bb07-2009.pdf>