

**TAC Meeting**  
**Los Angeles County Metro - Government Relations**  
**Federal and State Advocacy Updates**  
**June 1, 2011**

---

**Federal Legislative Update**

Please find below, five matters related to transportation issues pending before federal policymakers in Washington, DC.

**Senate Surface Transportation Bill and America Fast Forward**

First, for the first time in a very long time – it appears that Congress is prepared to begin consideration of a new surface transportation bill. Senator Barbara Boxer has announced her hope of moving a bi-partisan bill forward in the coming month. And similarly, Chairman Mica in the U.S. House of Representatives has given every indication that the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will mark-up its version of a surface transportation bill within the next month or so. Which committee goes first, at this point, remains unclear.

- We are in close touch with both committees and will keep TAC apprised of any developments on this front.

In the welcome news – Senator Boxer two weeks ago – in the presence of several of our Board members – announced that she was going to name the innovative financing portion of her authorization bill – America Fast Forward.

- This development speaks to the leadership of this Board in adopting our policy of accelerating both our highway and transit program.

**House Appropriations Committee**

The House has announced its plan to mark up its transportation spending bill in subcommittee on July 14<sup>th</sup> and in the full committee on July 24<sup>th</sup>.

- The disconcerting news is that the annual allocation to the transportation account by appropriations leaders is only \$47 billion, which is less than the \$55 billion provided last year – and far short of the Obama Administration's budget proposal for \$74 billion for the same account.
- We expect the Senate, under the leadership of transportation appropriations chair Patty Murray, to announce her plans to mark-up a bill – very shortly.

**New Starts**

With allocation of only \$47 billion given to transportation needs in the House bill for FY2012, it is fair to conclude that the New Starts will be under major financial constraints. And in the Senate, Senator Patty Murray will be pressed to make whole President Obama's request for \$3.2 billion in New Starts funding for Fiscal Year 2012.

- We are working with both of our Senators and our Los Angeles County Congressional Delegation to seek to bolster our drive for New Starts funding for both of our projects – the Regional Connector and the Westside Subway Extension.

## **Non-New Starts**

The Obama Administration is going to be issuing guidelines for the TIGER 3 grant program in a matter of days or weeks. Our staff will be carefully reviewing these guidelines to see how best our agency can compete for these federal dollars [\$523 million].

## **Transit Security Grants**

Congress, specifically the House – is prepared to dramatically reduce funding for transit security grants. The transit security grants we receive are secured from a State and Local Programs account. The account was funded at \$3 billion in Fiscal Year 2010 and \$2.2 billion Fiscal Year 2011. The House Homeland Security appropriations bill adopted last week seeks to slash this account to a level of \$1 billion.

- It would be fair to assume that our ability to secure transit security grants would be compromised if this funding level were adopted into law.
- We and our advocates are working with the chair of the Senate Homeland Security appropriations committee – Mary Landrieu – to ensure that the cuts in the House are not replicated in the Senate.

## **High Speed Rail Funding**

\$2 billion rejected by the State of Florida was re-allocated. California secured \$300 million for a 20-mile extension along the Central Valley Corridor and \$68 million to acquire 15 high-performance passenger rail cars and 4 quick-acceleration locomotives for the Pacific Surf-liner, San Joaquin, and Capitol Corridors in California.

## **Highway Trust Fund**

Highway Trust Fund is facing solvency challenges as early as next year. Whether we are talking about the reauthorization debate or the annual transportation funding bill – everything relates to the Highway Trust Fund.

- If Congress and the White House fail to address its solvency – we believe that there will be no marked improvement in our nation's infrastructure.

## **State Legislative Update**

### **Transportation Bonds**

- Budget Subcommittees met on Wednesday May 25, 2011 to consider the Governor's May Revision to the State Budget
- The May Revision identifies extra cash from previous bond sales and allocates funds for a bond sale in the fall.
- It is not clear at this point if that amount will allow new projects to start or just fund those projects in construction.
- The committees asked for more information regarding the ability to fund all project needs.

### **High Speed Rail**

- The Budget also includes funds for the staffing needs of the High Speed Rail Authority.
- The LAO has also issued a report on the High Speed Rail project which is being discussed in Sacramento. That report can be accessed at [www.lao.ca.gov](http://www.lao.ca.gov).