

Update from ITS America – 12/18/09

On Wednesday, the U.S. House voted by a 217 – 212 margin to approve a \$154 billion jobs bill (H.R. 2847, the [Jobs For Main Street Act](#)) that would appropriate just over **\$37 billion in funding for transportation**. Within this amount, the bill includes **\$27.5 billion for highways** and **\$8.4 billion for transit projects**, the same amounts that were included in the [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act](#) (ARRA) which was passed in February. As with ARRA, transportation projects will be **funded at 100 percent federal share** instead of the traditional 80-20 federal-local split, and half of the funding would have to be obligated within 90 days as opposed to the 120-day deadline in ARRA. Unlike the Recovery Act, the new bill does not contain competitive [TIGER grants](#) or additional funding for high speed rail.

President Obama praised passage the bill, saying the legislation offered “new initiatives including repairing our roads and bridges, providing relief to Americans who have lost their jobs, and preventing layoffs at the state and local level.” According to [House Transportation and Infrastructure \(T&I\) Committee](#) Chairman James Oberstar (D-MN), the transportation projects underway as a result of ARRA “have created or sustained more than 210,000 direct, on-project jobs with payrolls exceeding \$1.1 billion. When we add indirect and induced jobs, the number climbs to nearly 630,000.” The Senate is expected to begin debate on a jobs bill in January. Additional details on the bill are available [here](#).

ITS America-led Coalition Urges President Obama to Invest in ITS

[ITS America](#) was joined this week by a diverse coalition that includes the world’s largest business association, environmental and Smart Growth advocates, public safety organizations, highway, transit and automotive associations, and other transportation leaders in urging President Obama to work with Congress to invest in ITS and operational improvements in order to accelerate job creation and economic recovery. The letter also highlights the benefits of ITS for preventing traffic crashes, improving emergency response, reducing congestion, fuel consumption and CO2 emissions, improving multimodal system performance, and creating more livable, sustainable communities.

“As you work with Congress to draft a jobs bill, we urge you to invest in Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) and operational improvements that will expand green jobs, small businesses and the smart-tech industry while also saving lives, time and money by preventing traffic crashes, improving emergency response, reducing congestion, fuel consumption and CO2 emissions, improving transportation system performance, and creating more livable, sustainable communities,” the coalition wrote to President Obama.

The letter, available [here](#), is co-signed by over a dozen national organizations including AAA, Mothers Against Drunk Driving, Transportation for America, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, American Public Transportation Association, American Bus Association, Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, American Highway Users Alliance, Association for Commuter Transportation, National Association of State EMS Officials, Institute of Transportation Engineers, Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, and

Building America's Future. The letter also includes signatures from key state, city and local officials, private industry leaders, and academic experts including former Transportation Secretary Mary E. Peters. The complete list of signatories is online [here](#), and a press release on the letter is available [here](#).

SAFETEA-LU Authorization Update

The jobs bill passed by the House this week includes a provision to extend the current SAFETEA-LU authorization through September 30, 2010. However, since the Senate is not planning to act on the jobs bill until next year, the House included a short-term extension of SAFETEA-LU in the Fiscal Year 2010 Defense Appropriations bill that would continue transportation programs through the end of February. An even shorter-term continuing resolution was also passed by the House to give the Senate another week to approve the defense spending bill containing the two-month SAFETEA-LU extension. The Senate is expected to vote on the defense appropriations bill tomorrow.

FY 2010 Transportation Appropriations Bill Signed

The President this week signed the conference report to the [Fiscal Year 2010 transportation appropriations bill](#), almost two months into the current fiscal year. The conference report includes \$447 billion for several spending bills including \$122.1 billion for the U.S. Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, a 12 percent increase over FY 2009 levels. A summary of the bill's provisions is available [here](#), and additional information is available [here](#).

5-Year ITS Strategic Plan Approved

The [ITS Joint Program Office](#) (JPO) announced that its 5-Year ITS Strategic Research Plan has been unanimously approved by U.S. DOT's ITS Management Council. According to the ITS JPO, the plan "explores the potentially transformative capabilities of wireless technology to make surface transportation safer, smarter and greener and ultimately enhance livability for Americans." The core of the research plan will be focused on [IntelliDriveSM](#), according to an [introduction to the 5-Year Plan](#). More detailed information is scheduled to be released at the Transportation Research Board (TRB) Annual Meeting in January. In a [letter to ITS stakeholders](#), Shelley Row, Director of the ITS JPO, said "Now that the plan has full U.S. DOT support, the ITS Joint Program Office and modal partners are focused on its execution. We aim to balance the needs for rapid execution of work that is already clearly defined and for which stakeholders have indicated a clear interest, with the desire for additional stakeholder input on many aspects of the work program. Toward this end, we plan to seek additional input from you over the coming months to help us refine the scope of these programs."

Climate Change Legislative and Regulatory Update

After consideration of more than 300,000 public comments, the U.S. [Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA) [announced last week](#) that greenhouse gases (GHGs) threaten the public health and welfare of the American people. EPA also found that GHG emissions from on-road vehicles contribute to that threat. According to [EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson](#), "EPA has finalized its endangerment finding on greenhouse gas pollution and is now authorized and obligated to make reasonable efforts to reduce greenhouse pollutants. This administration will not ignore science or

the law any longer.” Jackson and President Obama have publicly stated that they would prefer Congressional action on climate change to EPA regulation through the Clean Air Act.

On December 10th, Senators John Kerry (D-MA), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), and Joe Lieberman (I-CT) released their [framework for climate change and energy independence legislation](#), which seeks to find common ground in the contentious debate over current climate change bills. “Over the past month, we have been working together to develop consensus on a comprehensive pollution reduction and energy independence plan,” the Senators said in a letter to President Obama. “Support is building to simultaneously create jobs, protect our national security interests, and improve our environment. As you depart for Copenhagen, we wanted to provide an assessment of where we see the debate heading in the United States Senate.”

The following day, U.S. Senators Maria Cantwell (D-WA) and Susan Collins (R-ME) introduced [bipartisan legislation](#) intended to reduce global warming pollution, spur job growth in clean energy technology, and return money to consumers. In their [announcement of the bill](#), Senators Cantwell and Collins said the Carbon Limits and Energy for America's Renewal (CLEAR) Act would “set up a mechanism for selling ‘carbon shares’ to fuel producers and would return most of the resulting revenue in checks to every American.” The legislation will achieve a reduction in GHG emissions of 20 percent by 2020 and 83 percent by 2050, they said. A summary of the bill is available [here](#).

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[ITS America's 20th Annual Meeting & Exposition – May 3-5, 2010 – Houston, Texas](#)

Mark your calendar and make plans to attend!

ITS America is the leading advocate for technologies that improve the safety, security and efficiency of the nation's transportation system.