



Transfer

Surface Transportation Policy Project's Electronic Update

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Announcements



Register now for this year's Railvolution conference, being held in Atlanta, Georgia September 10-14. Limited scholarships are available. Railvolution is THE national forum that explores how transit and land use can work hand-in-hand to shape the best and brightest of livable communities.

For more information, [click here](#).

[Transfer Archives](#)

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Administration's SAFETEA Proposal Unveiled

The Bush Administration's proposal for renewing the nation's surface transportation law was unveiled May 14th by Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta. The Safe and Flexible Transportation Efficiency Act of 2003, or "SAFETEA," received mixed reviews among many transportation interests, including STPP and its coalition partners.



SAFETEA calls for reforms and changes to the current ISTEA/TEA-21 framework, and proposes a total spending level of \$247 billion for highway and transit programs.

In a statement on the proposal for renewing TEA-21, STPP President Anne Canby praised the Administration for preserving the "general framework" of the current transportation law but was concerned that the SAFETA plan takes "some wrong turns," a message that was echoed by many STPP partners.

STPP President Anne Canby called attention to a number of proposals, citing those that specifically that weaken protections for clean air, historic preservation, parks and wildlife habitat and funding commitments to public transit.

In her statement, Canby stated, "the bill lacks necessary funding for urgently needed clean air measures the public wants, and it reduces the frequency with which transportation decision-makers are held accountable for healthier air." She also cited the weakening of Section 4(f) protections (enacted in 1966 to provide substantive federal protections for historic, cultural and natural assets) and funding commitments to public transit as other examples of wrong turns.

A number of transportation providers took aim at the Administration's proposed funding levels, which are substantially below what House and Senate authorizers are seeking in legislation renewing the 1998 TEA-21 law, which is set to expire September 30th.

In a statement on SAFETEA, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Don Young stated, "There simply isn't enough funding in the Administration's bill to address our efforts to address our nation's growing congestion problems." Chairman Young also pointed out that if the plan is adjusted to constant 2003 dollars, the SAFETEA proposal provides "less funding than TEA-21 did."

The proposal spans more than 400 pages of legislative changes and charts some new directions on cost accountability, performance standards, intermodal freight, system operations and research, areas where Canby and others are praising the Administration's efforts.

To access the Administration's SAFETEA proposal, including a detailed section-by-section analysis, and other information, visit www.dot.gov.

Mineta Defends SAFETEA on Capitol Hill

Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta made the case for the Administration's transportation spending plan May 15th before a House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee, discussing details of the package with panel members, many of whom had served with him on the Committee.



Mineta specifically emphasized the safety aspects of the renewal plan, stating, "the President and I have made saving lives an essential priority for the Department and for the reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century." He explained that for every 1 percent increase in seatbelt use, "we would save 250 lives."

Questioning by Committee members focused largely on the need for additional resources or individual member comments about district project needs and concerns. Key Committee leaders openly speculated that unless additional resources are found, a multi-year renewal of TEA-21 was unlikely this year, with a short one- or two-year extension bill being more likely.

Following a review of the Administration's initiatives on safety, featuring the establishment of a new "Highway Safety Improvement Program" that absorbs the current STP Safety Set-aside program, most of Mineta's statement and remarks focused on proposals to expand state and local flexibility and improve project delivery.

To view Secretary Mineta's full May 15th statement to the House Subcommittee on Highways, Transit and Pipelines, which provides an excellent overview of the Administration's plan, visit www.house.gov/transportation/.

Secretary Mineta is scheduled to appear before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee this week to discuss the details of the Administration's SAFETEA plan.

Study Evaluates Economic Impact of Transportation Investments

A study released in the U.S. House of Representatives on May 13 argued that the House funding proposal for the reauthorized TEA-21 bill would result in a GDP increase of \$290 billion above the level generated by the administration's proposed funding level. The study which was commissioned by the American Public Transit Association and the Transportation Construction Coalition used economic modeling to quantify impacts of the proposed \$375 billion investment on the U.S. economy. The analysis took into account the direct and indirect economic impacts of both highway and transit investments.

According to study results, the economic stimulus resulting from the investment would result not only in an increase in the national GDP but, among other benefits, would yield an increase of \$129 billion in disposable income amounting to \$1,100 per household over the six year life of the bill, well over the estimated cost of \$270 per household of the gas tax hike necessary to finance the bill.

Donor/Donee Debate Heats Up With Upcoming Legislation

The fourteen states that make up the States' Highway Alliance for Real Equity (SHARE) are pushing for an adjustment of the way in which the federal government divides up Highway Trust Fund revenues. The current structure guarantees all states a 90.5% annual return on the highway money they receive as a share of their contribution to the trust fund. Congressional supporters of the SHARE plan, which was developed by this group of "donor states," are expected to introduce legislation in the House and the Senate on May 21 that increases the level of return to 95%.



Innovative Financing Conference

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) will host a one-day conference on Value Pricing in the Washington Region on Wednesday, June 4. The conference will focus on innovative transportation pricing strategies being implemented in some U.S. and international locations and under consideration in others, including the Washington region.

[Click here](#) for information on registration and who will be speaking at the conference.

CNU XI Conference

The Congress for New Urbanism will be hosting their annual conference in Washington, DC on June 19-22. This year's conference theme, *Ideals to Realities: The Evolving City*, will focus on how ideas and governmental actions create places - and how these places then adapt over time. [Click here](#) for information on the agenda, guest speakers, and registration.

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