



Transfer

Surface Transportation Policy Project's Electronic Update

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Announcements



Rail-Volution is an annual conference on building livable communities with transit, through education, advocacy and increasing overall federal, state and local funds available for transit. This year's conference is in Atlanta, GA on Sept. 11-14.

[Click here](#) for more info.

9/10, "Making the Connection: Transportation and Health" House staff briefing hosted by Reps. Earl Blumenauer (D-OR) and Mark Foley (R-FL) with John Balbus, Environmental Defense, Bill Wilkinson, National Center for Bicycling and Walking, and Betsy Thompsom of Rockville.

Also at the briefing, 43 national and regional health organizations, along with 38 affiliated organizations, will release a letter to Congress encouraging lawmakers to consider public health as they draft the new transportation bill. A similar letter endorsed by over 475 health professionals and concerned individuals will be released at the same time. For a copy of the letter, [click here](#).

9/12, "Health Effects of Transportation Policy" lunch hosted by the Women's Transportation Seminar with Michael Replogle, Environmental Defense, Martha Roskowski, America Bikes and Carol Stroebel, Coalition Resources. For more details, contact Jane Bass at 571.227.1126 or RSVP at wtsdcprogram@onebox.com.

Smart Growth Technical Assistance now Available

The Smart Growth Leadership Institute, a new non-profit organization working to develop a new generation of skilled smart growth leaders, is offering technical assistance to a select number of communities in areas such as smart codes, design standards, and review protocol. Participants will help shape a national Smart Growth Implementation Kit.

For more information, contact Jessica Cogan at

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House Votes to Restore Enhancements Program, Amtrak Still Underfunded

On September 4, the House of Representatives voted overwhelmingly to restore the Enhancements program and overturn a House Appropriations Committee proposal to terminate this set-aside program for the upcoming federal fiscal year.

The House approved the Petri/Olver amendment by a whopping 327-90 margin, an action that strongly affirmed the value of and strong support for the Enhancements program, one of the key reforms of the 1991 ISTEA law. The amendment was supported by scores of national groups, ranging from architects, bicyclists and seniors to state and local officials, including the nation's cities, counties, mayors and state transportation departments.

During debate on the House floor, Representative Thomas E. Petri (R-WI) said, "the enhancements program -- created in 1991 and continued and improved in TEA 21 -- is a treasured part of a balanced, progressive transportation program."

Joining with Petri (R-WI) and Representative John W. Olver (D-MA) as sponsors of the amendment were: Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY), Steven C. LaTourette (R-OH), William O. Lipinski (D-IL), James. L. Oberstar (D-MN), Michael Pence (R-OH) and Nick J. Rahall, II (D-WVA).

In a statement on the House vote, STPP President Anne Canby praised these sponsors and others for their support of the program, adding that "the House vote to preserve the Transportation Enhancements program re-affirms that Congress got it right 1991 with "ISTEA" and again in 1998, through its successor legislation "TEA-21" when it decided that the federal transportation program should be about providing safer and more convenient transportation options." To read Canby's statement, [click here](#).

The final vote on the amendment reflected broad, bipartisan support. To examine the full vote on the Petri/Olver amendment, [click here](#).

The House of Representatives finalized its work on the Transportation Appropriations bill (H.R. 2989) on September 9. Even with the positive vote on Enhancements, there are still other issues of concern, such as the bill's funding level for Amtrak and public transit programs, including a cut in the Jobs Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program. While there were efforts to offer amendments to increase funding for Amtrak above the \$900 million provided by the Committee bill, these amendments were ruled out of order during House floor action. Other amendments to cut below the \$900 million level were defeated. The final House funding is one-half of the \$1.8 billion that Amtrak and a majority of House members requested.

Senate Panel Approves its Transportation Measure

The Senate Appropriations Committee September 4 passed its version of the FY'04 Transportation, Treasury, and Independent Agencies Appropriations bill. The bill calls for \$7.35 billion for the federal transit program and \$33.84

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billion for the federal highway program, plus an additional \$931 million in special highway funds is provided to the states. Similar to spending levels approved by the full House, Senate appropriators would boost highway spending by \$2.2 billion above current levels, while providing transit with a modest \$172 million increase.

The Senate version would fund the New Starts program at \$1.318 billion, a \$104 million increase over the House level, and the Job Access and Reverse Commute program at \$125 million, \$40 million above the House level. Altogether, the Senate committee approved \$107 million more for transit and \$400 million more for highways than the level passed by the full House on Thursday.

In addition, the Senate appropriations package calls for a higher funding level for Amtrak. Compared to the \$900 million level passed by the House, the Senate committee would provide \$1.346 billion for the nation's passenger rail system and a favorable adjustment for its outstanding loan of \$100 million. The level, however, is well below the \$1.8 billion requested by Amtrak CEO David Gunn.

The bill is expected to come to the Senate floor in mid-September.

[New Report Finds 2002 Smog Season Worst In Years](#)

This week, the U.S. PIRG Education Fund released "Danger in the Air: Unhealthy Levels of Smog in 2002," which found that 2002 was the worst smog season in recent years. Forty-one states and DC exceeded the 8-hour ozone standard 8,818 times in 2002, nearly double the number of exceedances in 2001. The report includes comprehensive data for 2002 and preliminary data for 2003. To view the report, visit <http://uspirg.org/uspirg.asp?id2=10593&id3=USPIRG&>.



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