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H.R. 2887, The Surface and Air Transportation Programs Extension Act **LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN**

CENTRAL POINTS:

- This bipartisan bill will reauthorize the FAA through January 31, 2012. It is a clean extension, with no policy riders or funding cuts, and will avoid a shutdown that would force 74,000 Americans off the job without pay.
- Ideally, H.R. 2887 will provide House and Senate negotiators with an opportunity to finalize a long-term FAA reauthorization package after more than 20 short-term extensions.
- This bill will also reauthorize federal surface transportation programs, as well as the government's authority to collect the federal gas tax, through March 31, 2012, protecting 1.8 million jobs that would be at risk if these programs expired.
- Over the next six months, Senate Democrats will continue to fight to reauthorize highway and transit programs at current funding levels. House Republicans have offered a package that would cut funding by more than 30 percent over six years, eliminating more than 630,000 jobs in fiscal year 2012 alone.

BACKGROUND

H.R. 2887 passed the House of Representatives by voice vote on September 13, 2011.

FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION

H.R. 2887 will be the 22nd short-term reauthorization for the Federal Aviation Administration since the last long-term authorization bill expired in 2007. The current authorization expires September 16, 2011. The House and Senate have each passed long-term FAA bills and continue to work out the differences between the two proposals at the staff level. While the Senate appointed conferees in April, the House has yet to name conferees.

If FAA authorization were to expire, as it did briefly in August 2011, approximately [74,000 workers](#) – 4,000 FAA employees and 70,000 construction and contract workers – would be furloughed without pay and the trust fund would lose \$200 million every week.

H.R. 2887 reauthorizes the FAA through January 31, 2012. It is a clean extension, with no policy riders or funding cuts. Ideally, this bipartisan FAA extension will provide adequate opportunity to finalize a full FAA Reauthorization package.

Full-year funding at the proposed FAA extension level would approximately amount to the following authorizations for the agency's primary programs: Airport Improvement Program (AIP) – \$3,515,000,000; Operations – \$9,514,000,000; Facilities and Equipment (F&E) – \$2,731,000,000; Research, Engineering and Development (R,E&D) – \$170 million; and, Essential Air Service (EAS) – \$200 million.

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS

The last long-term surface transportation bill expired at the end of fiscal year 2009, and has been continued under short-term extensions since that time. The current authorization expires September 30, 2011. The House has offered a long-term proposal that cuts funding by more than 30 percent, [eliminating more than 630,000 jobs](#). In the Senate, Barbara Boxer, Chair of the Environment and Public Works Committee, has outlined a bipartisan two-year reauthorization proposal that would continue funding for highway and other construction projects at current levels, protecting those jobs. On September 8, the Senate EPW Committee [unanimously](#) approved a clean, short-term extension of highway programs at current funding levels.

If the surface transportation authorization were to expire, [1.8 million](#) American jobs would be at risk.

H.R. 2887 reauthorizes the Surface Transportation programs, along with the government's authority to collect the federal gas tax, through March 31, 2012. Although the legislation does not include any significant policy changes, H.R. 2887 does reduce the amount of new contract authority being provided for fiscal year 2012 by \$3 billion. While this does not impact spending levels at this time, Chairman Boxer intends to do everything to keep the next multi-year transportation bill at current levels of funding, because to do less would lead to more unemployment and raise serious safety issues as we face the challenge of deteriorating roads, bridges and other transportation systems.

KEY SUPPORTERS OF H.R. 2887

U.S. Chamber of Commerce: "The Chamber applauds the House and Senate leadership for recognizing the importance of extending surface transportation and aviation programs at current funding levels in order to sustain jobs. By putting forth clean extensions that continue obligations at FY2011 levels, states and other project sponsors can move forward on projects and keep people working. Once Congress passes these extensions, they can move toward the job-creating investments in our transportation infrastructure."

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials: "This extension will allow state DOTs to continue to deliver jobs for our nation's economy while maintaining the funding continuity needed to operate and maintain a national transportation system... We congratulate Sen. Boxer (D-California) and Rep. Mica (R-Florida), as chairs of their respective Senate and House committees, for their leadership and support for a national job creating and sustaining surface transportation program."

AFL-CIO: "Reauthorizing these two key multi-year bills would ensure that we get millions of workers back on the job improving, repairing and maintaining our crumbling highway, transit, and aviation transportation systems."

U.S. Conference of Mayors: "As representatives of the nation's mayors, we are writing to urge you to provide for a timely extension of the nation's surface transportation law (SAFETEA-LU) by September 30, along with an extension of existing federal transportation user fees that support critical investments in our transportation systems. The clock is ticking. If such an extension is not signed by the President before September 30, the entire program will be suspended – as was the case recently with the FAA bill - threatening the loss of 1.8 million jobs and doing irreparable harm to our already crumbling infrastructure."

American Council of Engineering Companies: "H.R. 2887 represents a responsible approach to provide transportation agencies with the certainty they need to keep current projects moving forward and begin

work on longer-term transportation improvements. Given the dire condition of our infrastructure and the current economic condition of the country, we cannot afford to let important preservation and improvement projects stall. These projects engage a broad spectrum of workers, sustaining job creation and providing America with much-needed modernized infrastructure.”