

FLORIDIANS FOR BETTER



TRANSPORTATION

Federal Update – September 2004

TEA-21 Reauthorization

Negotiations between House and Senate conference leadership on TEA-21 reauthorization have been continuing. Much of the discussion has focused on whether the House conferee offer of \$284 billion is sufficient to satisfy the concerns of donor states like Florida, and other funding distribution issues.

House and Senate Republican leaders are anxious to get the bill done this year and the Administration has even signaled its support for the House funding offer.

However, election year politics and limited legislative time left in this Congress is making it difficult to get agreement. Final action on the bill may have to wait until after the elections in a lame duck session.

Negotiations on the substantive policy issues in the bill have been put on hold pending an agreement on the overall funding level.

Senate DOT Appropriations Bill Moves

Despite the lack of an agreement on TEA-21 reauthorization legislation, Congress continues to move forward with a DOT appropriations measure for Fiscal Year 2005. The Senate transportation appropriations subcommittee last week marked up its version of the funding bill for the highway and transit programs.

The bill provides \$34.9 billion in obligation limit for highways, \$1.3 billion above this year's funding level. The bill would fund transit at \$7.7 billion, approximately \$300 million above the FY 04 level. This compares to the numbers agreed to previously by the House subcommittee of \$34.6 for highways and \$7.249 billion for transit.

An authorization bill is still necessary before this highway and transit funding, once finalized, can be distributed to the states. The Airport Improvement Program is funded at \$3.5 billion in both versions of the bill.

Florida's Bottom Line

To keep America moving and the nation's economic recovery on track, Congress should enact a well-funded, long-term federal reauthorization bill that ensures each state receives back no less than 95% of their federal gas tax dollars. Period!

FBT – Your "Voice" for Transportation!

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