

FLORIDIANS FOR BETTER



TRANSPORTATION

Federal Update – April 30, 2004

Transportation Bill Continues to Sputter Along

With another deadline due to expire, Congress has approved a two-month extension of TEA-21, allowing the existing program to run through June 30, 2004. This is the third extension that Congress has passed since the program was to have originally expired last September 30th.

Conferees have yet to be appointed to reconcile differences between the House and Senate versions of the legislation. There is no agreement among Congressional leaders as to the overall funding levels for the surface transportation programs. The struggle to approve a six-year transportation bill continues with no end in sight unless and until there is agreement on overall funding levels.

Federal Transportation – Fast Facts

Here's the basic facts on the House and Senate bills:

Senate- Provides \$318 billion over 6 years. Would keep Florida at a 90.5% guarantee level (calculated on about 93% of the total dollars) until the sixth year when this 90.5% guarantee would increase to 95%. The current 90.5% guarantee (covering 93% of the money) gives Florida an effective return of about 86 cents on the dollar.

House- Provides \$275 billion over 6 years -- down from the original total of \$375 billion! Would keep Florida at a 90.5% guarantee level ... and would only calculate this on 84% of the money! The net effect would be a reduction of Florida's "guaranteed" return from 86 cents to 76 cents. (*That's why 22 of Florida's 25 House Members were among the 65 U.S. House Members who voted NO on final passage.*) However, Florida's real return could increase depending upon how successful our 25 Congressmen and 2 Senators are at getting federal transportation dollars earmarked for Florida.

Bush Administration- Has threatened to veto TEA-21 Reauthorization legislation if the total funding levels are too high. Both the House and Senate-passed bills are ABOVE the levels proposed by the Administration in their SAFETEA legislation (\$248-\$256 billion) and both bills passed by VETO-PROOF MARGINS. Add in not only election year politics, but also Presidential election year politics, and one has got some interesting things happening!

FBT – Your “Voice” for Transportation!

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