



Transportation Details of Stimulus Compromise

February 13, 2009

House and Senate conferees have agreed to a \$789 billion economic stimulus bill that includes funding for transportation infrastructure programs. The House should vote on the compromise today and the Senate soon after.

While actual legislative language is not yet available, summaries of the agreement have been released, and here are the details concerning transportation funding:

- \$27.5 billion for high & bridge formula funding (below the \$30 billion House)
- \$1.5 billion for discretionary competitive grant program for surface transportation (Senate proposed \$5.5 billion)
- \$8.4 billion public transportation (below \$12 billion in the House)
- \$850 Amtrak capital grants (USDOT), \$450 million Amtrak security upgrades (DHS)
- \$1.1 billion Airport Improvement Grants (less than \$3 billion in House)
- \$8 billion for construction of high speed rail projects (increase from \$2 billion in Senate bill)

The “use or lose” deadline for states to obligate the first 50 percent of their apportionment was set at 120 days, a compromise between the 90 day House limit and 180 day Senate limit.

Unobligated funds from the first 50 percent will be redistributed to states that have used their funds. All of the funds must be obligated one year after enactment, as was proposed in the Senate. It is unclear what happens to the unused second portion of the funds. The House bill redistributed these funds to the states, the Senate bill puts these unobligated funds in the new discretionary grants program.

U.S. DOT Secretary Ray LaHood views this funding as only a first step in addressing transportation infrastructure needs and that reauthorization of SAFETEA-LU before September 30, 2009 is a priority.

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