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FEDERAL UPDATE

Senate Defeats Amendments on Enhancements Funding in Transportation Spending Bill

The Senate took up the FY10 Transportation Appropriations Bill (HR 3288) this week and Sens. Tom Coburn (R-OK) and John McCain (R-AZ) proposed three amendments to the bill that would drastically affect funding for transportation-related museums in the Transportation Enhancements program, of which one was withdrawn. The remaining two amendments were defeated by clear margins.

The text of the amendments and the resulting roll call votes were as follows:

- *Amendment No. 2370*, to fully provide for the critical surface transportation needs of the United States by prohibiting funds from being used on lower-priority projects, such as road-kill reduction programs, transportation museums, scenic beautification projects, or bicycle paths, if the Highway Trust Fund does not contain amounts sufficient to cover unfunded highway authorizations (withdrawn under unanimous consent).
- *Amendment No. 2371*, to remove an unnecessary and burdensome mandate on the States, by allowing them to opt out of a provision that requires States to spend 10 percent of their surface transportation funds on enhancement projects such as road-kill reduction and highway beautification (Defeated 59-39).
- *Amendment No. 2372*, to fully provide for the critical surface transportation needs of the United States by prohibiting funds from being used on lower-priority projects, such as transportation museums (Defeated 57-41).

The votes were clearly in favor of preserving the thrust and purpose of transportation enhancements program funding but demonstrate that preservationists must remain vigilant in the upcoming negotiations in the next surface transportation reauthorization. The amendment (No. 2371) that would have allowed states to opt out of the 10 percent set aside for enhancements are the type of changes that could affect the long term viability of the Transportation Enhancements program when the next surface transportation authorization (see next story) is taken up by lawmakers.

Surface Transportation Authorization Extension

The Senate is expected to bring to the floor a bill that would extend the existing surface transportation authorization (SAFETEA-LU) by 18 months and include a transfer of almost \$20 billion from the general fund to the Highway Trust Fund. The \$51.5 billion draft measure – which consolidates three Senate committee-passed bills – would extend the current authorization until March 31, 2011. On Thursday, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

on Surface
Transportation
Authorization
Extension

chairman James Oberstar (D-MN) relented to Democratic rank and file members who want a three-month extension of the current bill in order to preserve highway construction jobs in their states and stimulate the economy. The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is expected to hold a markup of a three-month extension next week. However, any compromise with the Senate on the length of the extension could range from six months to a year, but not the full 18 months that the Obama Administration recommended.

Interior Department Issues Secretarial Order on Climate Change and Historic Sites

Interior Takes
Major Step to
Address Climate
Change Impacts
on Historic Sites
Located on
Public Lands

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar signed a Secretarial order on Monday setting up a Climate Change Response Council and eight regional response centers to study and respond to issues such as rising sea levels threatening historic structures and wildlife habitat. The order builds on the agency's efforts earlier this year to jumpstart renewable energy and carbon capture projects on park, refuge, and tribal lands. Eight DOI regional Climate Change Response Centers serving Alaska, the Northeast, the Southeast, the Southwest, the Midwest, the West, Northwest, and Pacific regions, "will synthesize existing climate change impact data and management strategies, help resource managers put them into action on the ground, and engage the public through education initiatives. In addition, a network of Landscape Conservation Cooperatives will engage DOI and federal agencies, local and state partners, and the public to craft practical, landscape-level strategies for managing climate change impacts within the eight regions."

Earlier this year, the National Trust submitted testimony for the record before the House Subcommittees on National Parks, Forests, and the Public Lands Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife on June 23rd. The Trust's testimony provided insight to lawmakers on the impact of climate change on historic and cultural resources in the Chesapeake Bay watershed area and also proposed federal policy efforts to address climate change's effects on historic and cultural resources nationwide.

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