

Legislative Issue Briefing

March 2009

AUTHORIZATION OF FEDERAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS

Federal surface transportation programs authorized under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) expire on September 30, 2009. Congress and the Administration must work aggressively to produce a new authorization bill that builds on SAFETEA-LU and deals with growing financing needs and areas such as energy and climate change. In its FY 2010 Budget outline, the Administration pledged to work with Congress “to reform surface transportation programs both to put the system on a sustainable financing path and to make investments in a more sustainable future, enhancing transit options and making our economy more productive and our communities more livable.”

APTA's vision of the next authorization bill recognizes that public transportation supports a strong economy and should be part of any national strategy for energy independence and climate change.

APTA's Key Principles for the Next Surface Transportation Authorization Bill:

- Authorize a significant increase in the federal public transportation program, with a total investment of no less than \$123 billion over the six-year authorization period;
- Strengthen funding guarantees so that authorized funds are appropriated and allow for long-range planning, financing, and leveraging needed transit investment;
- Restore and increase the purchasing power of the federal motor fuels user fee to support necessary increases in public transportation investment;
- Promote new revenue generated from additional financing mechanisms that supplement current revenue streams;
- Preserve a needs based approach to the distribution of funds and provide no less than an 80 percent match for all transit capital projects;
- Create incentives to increase state and local investment levels in public transportation and improve the current federal grant process to speed project delivery and reduce costs;
- Provide capital and operating assistance to meet costs associated with Federal requirements and help public transportation providers meet costs beyond their control;
- Support greater investment in research and development programs and funding to promote transit workforce development and career opportunities;

- **APTA strongly urges Congress to produce a new authorization that incorporates APTA's recommendations as set forth in its authorization proposal which can be found on the APTA website: http://www.apta.com/research/info/online/post_safetea_lu.cfm.**
- **APTA urges Congress to take necessary action to ensure the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund and the Mass Transit Account, while preserving contract authority and strengthening funding guarantees.**