



**National Conference of State Legislatures  
Office of State-Federal Relations**

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**Congress Approves Short-Term Transportation Extension; Aims for Long-Term Bill  
Before Thanksgiving**

On Oct. 28, Congress approved a [short-term extension](#) of authorization for federal surface transportation programs through Nov. 20. The short, three week extension is designed to provide additional time for Congress to complete a long-term reauthorization following the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's approval of the [Surface Transportation Reform and Reauthorization Act of 2015](#) (STRR), a six year authorization for federal surface transportation programs. Although the bill allocates \$261 billion to highway programs and \$74 billion to transit, the bill does not include a revenue title. That's required because the Highway Trust Fund currently has an [annual deficit of approximately \\$15 billion](#), and it is expected to grow to more than \$20 billion over the next decade. The full House is expected to debate the legislation in early November. Action in the House follows approval by the Senate in July of a six year reauthorization of federal surface transportation programs titled the Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy (DRIVE) Act ([H.R. 22](#)). This reauthorization would provide approximately \$275 billion in highway programs for six years, and provide an average annual increase in highway formula apportionments of 3 percent. However, the bill only includes enough funding to ensure the HTF remains solvent for three years.

Finally, included as part of the latest short-term extension legislation, is a [three year extension](#) for the rail industry—freight, public transportation and passenger rail—to fully install Positive Train Control, an electronic system used to track train speed and movement. Many in the rail industry have voiced concerns that they would have had to suspend service without an extension as the Federal Railroad Administration had acknowledged there was no legal leeway for them to alter the deadline without congressional action.

Stay tuned to NCSL for further developments in Congress as it works to approve a long-term reauthorization. For any additional questions or concerns please contact NCSL staff [Ben Husch](#) (202-624-7779) or [Melanie Condon](#) (202-624-3597).