

Info Alert

National Conference of State Legislatures Office of State-Federal Relations

April 10, 2014

Senate Committee Leaders Announce Agreement for Six-Year Surface Transportation Bill

Working Towards a Long-Term Authorization bill

On April 10, the [Senate Environment and Public Works](#) Chairman Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and Ranking Member David Vitter (R-La.), along with Senate Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee Chairman Tom Carper (D-Del.) and Ranking Member John Barrasso (R-Wyo.) [announced that they have agreed on principles](#) to reauthorize federal spending on surface transportation at current levels plus inflation for six years.

However, the senators noted that their agreement does not include a funding mechanism, which is under the jurisdiction of the Senate Finance committee. In order to fully fund current levels of surface transportation spending plus inflation for the next six years, the Senate Finance committee would need to identify approximately \$16 billion per year in additional funds, or \$96 billion in total.

In the House, reports have indicated that the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is expected to unveil its legislation later this spring or possibly in the early summer. Current authorization for surface transportation comes from the [Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act](#) (MAP-21), which will expire on Sept. 30, 2014.

Short Term Transportation Funding Complications

In addition to the work Congress is undertaking to reauthorize surface transportation funding, both the [U.S. Department of Transportation and the Congressional Budget Office](#) have reported that current transportation funding may be interrupted this summer as the balance of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) is below previous estimates. If the balance of the HTF falls below \$4 billion, as it is forecast to do over the summer, DOT may have to undertake cash management strategies that could slow down or reduce reimbursements to states. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-Pa.) previously noted that plans are being discussed to ensure the trust fund's solvency if Congress is unable to finish a long term bill by the summer.

NCSL continues to work with Congress on its work to reauthorize surface transportation, through its [MAP-21 Working Group](#). If you would like to learn more about the working group or have questions or concerns about surface transportation reauthorization please contact [Ben Husch](#) (202-624-7779).