
US DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FY2016 HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS BILL SUMMARY

The House Appropriations Committee released its FY16 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (Transportation-HUD) bill on April 28. The next day, the Transportation-HUD Subcommittee marked up and approved the bill with no amendments offered – standard practice in the Subcommittee. During the markup, full Committee Ranking Member Nita Lowey (D-NY) and Subcommittee Ranking Member David Price (D-NC) Price both took issue with inadequate funding for infrastructure, and legislative riders – policy amendments tacked onto spending bills - that would benefit the trucking industry and restrict travel to Cuba.

The full House Appropriations Committee is expected to markup and approve this bill next week, at which time we expect amendments to be offered and voted upon. The Senate Appropriations Committee has yet to approve top-line funding allocations for USDOT and other federal agencies, which must be done prior to release of their proposed appropriations bill.

Funding

The House Transportation-HUD bill would provide \$55.3 billion in total discretionary spending, which appears to be a \$1.5 billion increase over FY15 and \$9.7 billion below the Administration's budget. However, the bill actually represents a net increase of only \$25 million in discretionary spending above FY15, because of reduced offsets this FY from programs such as Federal Housing Administration receipts (\$1.1 billion reduction). Thus, the House Transportation-HUD bill would provide USDOT \$17.2 billion in discretionary appropriations in FY16, which would represent a cut of \$1 billion compared to FY15 and \$6.8 billion below the Administration's budget request. The Administration's budget presumes that the GROW AMERICA Act is enacted, which would authorize the federal surface transportation program for 6 years. [see programmatic funding chart on page 3]

TIGER

The FY16 House Transportation-HUD bill would provide \$100 million for the TIGER discretionary grant program, which is the same level introduced by the House Appropriations Committee last year. However, this amount is \$400 million less than the enacted levels for FY15 and \$1.15 billion less than the Administration's budget request. Unlike last year, the House T-HUD bill would not limit project eligibilities for TIGER grants to just highway, bridge and port projects, but rather keep broad eligibilities including multimodal and bike/pedestrian projects. This year's bill would not provide funding for planning grants. Further, the House's bill would decrease the federal match from 60% to 50% for TIGER projects, reduce the setaside for rural projects from 20% to 10% of overall appropriation for this program, and adjust the grant size down to \$2 to \$15 million per project, from \$10 to \$200 million.

Highways

The FY16 House Transportation-HUD bill would continue federal-aid Highway obligation limitations (contract authority from the Highway Trust Fund for a fiscal year) at FY15 levels of \$40.256 billion. The surface transportation authorization (MAP-21) expires on May 2015. It's expected that Congress will extend MAP-21 for up to 2 months or through the calendar year. How Congress would pay for the extension through the calendar year is still unknown.

Public Transportation

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) formula programs would be funded at FY15 levels of \$8.6 billion under the House's FY16 Transportation-HUD bill. The Capital Investment Grants ("New Starts") program

would receive an appropriation of \$1.92 billion under the bill, which represents a \$200 million cut from FY15 and a decrease of \$1.13 billion when compared to the Administration's budget. This funding appropriation would cover all projects currently with full funding grant agreements (FFGA) (\$1.385 billion), \$250 million for eligible projects to receive FFGAs this FY, \$40 million for core capacity projects, and provide funding for all Small Starts projects that will begin in FY16. In addition, the bill would provide \$75 million for Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) in the Washington, DC area, which represents a \$75 million decrease compared to last year.

The FY16 House Transportation-HUD bill would decrease the federal share for New Starts projects to 50 percent, which is a decrease of 10 percentage points compared to last year. The bill would *not* include two provisions found in the FY15 appropriations bill: the encouragement that the Secretary considers significant private contributions when calculating the non-Federal share of capital costs for New Starts projects; and, for New Starts projects without a FFGA, a non-federal share criteria that would place projects requiring less than 40 percent federal match ahead of others.

Passenger Rail

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) would receive \$1.4 billion, with zero funding available for high-speed rail or intercity passenger rail competitive grants. The House Transportation-HUD bill would fund Amtrak with \$1.139 billion in FY16, which represents a \$251 million decrease under the FY15 funding and a \$1.1 billion decrease under the Administration's budget request. The bill would increase Amtrak's operating account by \$39 million, but decreases the capital and debt service account by \$290 million.

The FY16 Transportation-HUD bill would restrict the Surface Transportation Board (STB) from permitting construction for the California High Speed Rail project unless it is for the entirety of the project. Further, the bill does not include a \$10 million discretionary grant program that was included in the FY15 bill used to provide rail grade crossing and track improvements on rail routes that transport energy products.

Other Provisions

The FY16 House Transportation-HUD bill includes two legislative riders that have drawn the ire of outside groups and USDOT Secretary Foxx. The first would bar the use of funds from this bill to facilitate new scheduled air travel from the US to Cuba or allow issuance of licenses or operating certificates for any vessel that docks within 7 miles of a Cuban port. Subcommittee Chairman Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL) is a Cuban American that strongly opposes President Obama's actions to open travel between the US and Cuba.

The second rider provisions would continue prohibitions included in the FY15 bill that restricts USDOT from enforcing trucker "restart" provisions pending the outcome of an ongoing study, and provide Kansas truck weight exemptions on their highways, which is already extended to Wyoming, Ohio, Alaska, Iowa and Nebraska. The bill would also increase truck weight allowance on Idaho's highways from 105,000 pounds to 129,000 pounds. And finally, the bill would extend the permitted length for trucks to 84 feet for those that operate in tractor- semitrailer-trailer combinations.

Full text for the FY16 House Transportation-HUD bill can be found [here](#).

FY16 House Transportation-HUD Appropriations Analysis

	USDOT FY15 Enacted Appropriations	House FY16 THUD Proposal	Administration FY16 THUD Proposal	Difference Between USDOT FY15 Enacted and Proposed House FY16 THUD Proposal	Difference Between USDOT FY15 Enacted and Proposed Administration FY16 THUD Proposal
Federal-Aid Highways	\$40.26B	\$40.26B	\$51.3B	-	-\$11.04B
Transit Formula Grants	\$8.6B	\$8.6B	\$13.9B	-	-\$5.3B
Transit 'New Starts' & 'Small Starts'	\$2.12B	\$1.92B	\$3.25B	-\$200M	-\$1.13B
TIGER	\$500M	\$100M	\$1.25B	-\$400M	-\$1.15B
Amtrak Operating	\$250M	\$289M	\$2.5B*	+\$39M	-\$1.1B
Amtrak Capital	\$1.14B	\$850M		-\$290M	

* Administration's FY16 budget request included Amtrak operating and capital accounts in a proposed "Current Passenger Rail Service" program.