



PRESS RELEASE

Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure

Don Young, Chairman

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Six-Year Highway & Transit Funding Legislation Introduced In U.S. House; \$283.9 Billion In Guaranteed Funding For All 50 States

Washington, D.C. - A six-year highway and transit funding bill that would guarantee \$283.9 billion through 2009 was officially introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives today.

The bipartisan legislation (**H.R. 3**) - "**The Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy For Users**" (**TEA LU**) - was introduced by:

- Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska), Chairman, Transportation & Infrastructure Committee
- Rep. James L. Oberstar (D-MN), Ranking Democrat, Transportation Committee
- Rep. Tom Petri (R-WI), Chairman, Highways, Transit & Pipelines Subcommittee
- Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-OR), Ranking Democrat, Highways & Transit Subcommittee

"On Monday, President Bush introduced his Fiscal Year 2006 Budget," **Chairman Don Young** said. "I was pleased that the budget includes an updated reauthorization proposal funding Federal highway, transit, and highway safety programs at \$283.9 billion over six years in guaranteed funding. This is a \$28 billion increase above the proposal introduced by the Administration two years ago, and I applaud the Administration's recognition of the pressing needs of America's highways and transit systems in this higher number.

"The bill we are introducing also funds the same programs at \$283.9 billion in guaranteed funding over six years, 2004 through 2009. I strongly believe that we have a much better chance of moving this legislation quickly in the 109th Congress, now that we are working with the same top line funding level that the President has endorsed.

"The other reason that this \$283.9 billion guaranteed funding level may sound familiar is that it was the total six-year guaranteed funding level that we almost agreed to in last year's conference negotiations. I am committed to getting back to conference as fast as possible," **Young** said.

"The reauthorization of TEA 21 is now more than a year overdue," said **Ranking Democrat James Oberstar**. "Last year, we were unable to reach consensus between our Committee, the leadership of the House, the Administration and the other body. We cannot afford to put this action off any longer. We need to move this bill quickly and get it through conference by the end of May, when the current authorization extension expires.

"I applaud Chairman Young for his leadership in producing this legislation and getting the process started in the 109th Congress," **Oberstar** said.

"I'm quite pleased to have this bill moving forward," **Subcommittee Chairman Tom Petri** said. "We clearly need to get the process going. To remain competitive, our nation needs a first-class transportation system suitable for the 21st Century, and this bill is a step in the right direction."

"This bill will provide real projects to meet real needs and create real jobs," said **Subcommittee Ranking Democrat Peter DeFazio**. "It will fund millions of critical highway, bridge and transportation projects across the United States, putting millions to work, maintaining and improving our critical transportation infrastructure."

Executive Summary

- TEA LU reauthorizes the federal highway, public transportation, highway safety, and motor carrier safety programs for six years, from fiscal years 2004 through 2009. The policy features of the bill from the last Congress are retained.
- The legislation provides a total of \$283.9 billion in guaranteed funding – a 42 percent increase over the guaranteed funding for TEA 21 (1998-2003).
- The bill's funding level has been formally endorsed by the Administration. President Bush's updated reauthorization proposal, which was submitted with the fiscal year 2006 Budget, supports a six-year reauthorization at \$283.9 billion.
- The legislation's guaranteed funding level of \$283.9 billion reflects the same funding level that Congressional negotiations had centered on in the closing days of the 108th Congress.
- The bill's guaranteed funding is \$4.5 billion higher than that the guaranteed funding level of \$279.4 billion passed by the House of Representatives in April 2004. The recently enacted American Jobs Creation Act restores ethanol-related losses to the Highway Trust Fund resulting from the 5.2 cents per gallon subsidy and revokes the diversion of 2.5 cents per gallon from the Highway Trust Fund to the General Fund.
- The legislation will continue and protect existing U.S. jobs in the transportation sector and related industries. Millions of new jobs will be created and sustained by the infrastructure funding increases in TEA LU.
- TEA LU grows highway obligation authority from \$34.4 billion in 2004 to \$41 billion in 2009; public transportation funding grows from \$7.3 billion in 2004 to \$10.3 billion in 2009.
- The same new highway programs authorized by the House last year are included in this legislation to improve congestion and move freight more efficiently. The bill authorizes a new \$6 billion "Projects of National and Regional Significance" program to help States pay for high-cost highway projects that have significant national or regional benefits.

Americans Waste \$67 Billion Each Year Due To Congestion

Each year, congestion costs American drivers \$67 billion in lost productivity and wasted motor fuel. This includes 3.6 billion hours of delays and 5.7 billion gallons of wasted motor fuel each year. Congestion costs the average traveler who drives during peak periods \$1,160 a year.

Traffic congestion affects 33 percent of all travel on America's major roadways.

TEA LU creates a Congestion Relief Program that requires states to focus resources on the congestion problems on their roadways. TEA LU's Congestion Relief Program implements new state spending requirements for projects that increase motor vehicle travel reliability, maximize roadway capacity and efficiency, and remove bottlenecks. The bill also establishes time periods for completion of Congestion Relief projects.

The Congestion Relief provisions will help highway managers squeeze more capacity from our existing highway investments while empowering them to build projects and conduct analyses that will also recapture unused capacity.

42,000 Americans Are Killed On Our Highways Each Year

More than 42,000 Americans are killed and 2.9 million are seriously injured each year on the Nation's highways.

Substandard road conditions and roadside hazards are contributing factors in nearly one-third of all fatal crashes each year. Motor vehicle crashes cost the United States \$231 billion annually, including \$21 billion from Federal and State tax revenue.

TEA LU creates a new core program for highway safety infrastructure improvements with its own dedicated funding stream. The legislation provides \$590 million for a new High Risk Rural Road Safety Improvement Program that targets funding for safety improvements on rural two-lane roads. About 61 percent of all highway-related fatalities occur on rural roads.

The bill also increases funding for NHTSA highway safety formula grants to support a full range of state safety programs including, impaired driving programs, occupant protection programs, motorcycle safety, police traffic services and roadway safety.

The bill also creates a new Safe Routes to School program which provides \$875 million over five years in formula funding to states to encourage communities to adopt strategies and fund projects designed to allow children to walk and bike to school safely.

Public Transportation Ridership Has Increased 21 Percent Since 1996

From 1996 to 2002, public transit ridership grew 21 percent, and now carries 9.6 billion passenger trips a year. But in many U.S. cities, public transportation infrastructure is not keeping up with demand. Public transportation provides vital mobility to seniors, individuals with disabilities, and families with only one car or no car – but in 40 percent of U.S. counties, there is no public transportation system.

Highway congestion is a growing problem in nearly every part of the country. If public transportation was unavailable and people were forced to drive, congestion on our nation's highways would be worse than it is today.

To help address these problems, TEA LU increases funding to meet public transportation infrastructure needs. The DOT Conditions & Performance report shows that 36 percent of the nation's urban rail vehicles and maintenance facilities and 29 percent of the nation's bus fleet and maintenance facilities are in substandard or poor condition.

The legislation provides \$52.35 billion for transit programs, all guaranteed. This is a 51 percent increase in guaranteed funding. TEA 21 authorized \$41 billion for transit programs, of which \$36 billion was guaranteed funding.

The bill also increases the percentage of formula funding for public transportation in rural areas (towns of less than 50,000 population). Total six-year funding for rural public transportation increases by 60 percent, going from \$1.25 billion in TEA 21 to \$2 billion in TEA LU.

The legislation strengthens public transportation services for individuals with disabilities and authorizes President Bush's "New Freedom Initiative", which provides funds for new disabled transportation activities in areas where they are not available, or that go beyond the requirements of the Americans With Disabilities Act.

**For additional information, access the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee website at:
www.house.gov/transportation**

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