

**MEMBER-DESIGNATED SURFACE TRANSPORTATION
HIGH PRIORITY PROJECT REFORM PRINCIPLES**

*Prepared by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Majority Staff
April 2, 2009*

To address concerns that have been raised with the Member-designated Surface Transportation High Priority Project (HPP) program authorized in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and prior surface transportation legislation and to ensure that projects that receive funding in this surface transportation authorization act result in tangible transportation and safety benefits, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has adopted the following principles for Member-designated High Priority Projects:

- **The Committee requires all projects to meet eligibility criteria** under Title 23 (Highways) or Chapter 53 of Title 49 (Public Transit) of the United States Code to ensure that HPPs comply with highway and transit program objectives. In addition, **the Committee specifically prohibits HPP funding for non-surface transportation projects, such as funding of transportation museums, horse trails, historic battlefields, and other non-transportation projects.**

- **The Committee requires Members to provide specific information on the type, location, total cost, percentage of total cost that the request would finance, and benefits of the project,** in order for the Committee to effectively analyze the merits of project requests.

- **The Committee requires Members to specifically identify funding to finance at least 80 percent of the total cost of the phase or segment of the project requested by either (1) the amount requested by the Member; or (2) the amount requested by the Member and other specifically designated Federal, state, local, or private funding sources.** The intent of this provision is to increase the likelihood that construction of the project will be underway during the term of the Act.

- To ensure that HPPs have significant state or local support, **the Committee requires Members to provide at least one letter of support for the project from the state Department of Transportation or affected local government or governmental agency.**

The Committee requires such government to specify the process which will be followed to **provide an opportunity for public comment** (such as the Environmental Impact Statement or other permitting process that requires public review) on the project.

The Committee also requires such government to **identify other Federal, state, local, or private funding sources** that may be used to advance the project.

- To ensure greater transparency and accountability for HPPs, **the Committee establishes the following transparency and accountability principles:**
 - **Members are required to certify that neither the Member nor his or her spouse has any financial interest in a project requested;**
 - **Members are required to post requests for projects on the Member's website;**
 - **The Committee will afford the U.S. Department of Transportation at least 20 days to review all project requests to ensure that the projects meet program eligibility criteria;**
 - **A list of all Member-designated Surface Transportation High Priority Projects that are included in the bill will be posted on the Committee website; and**
 - **A copy of all Member financial interest certifications for HPPs that are included in the bill will be posted on the Committee website.**

- **The Committee intends to repeal prior ISTEA and TEA 21 project designations that have not proceeded to construction or have remaining unused funds to ensure the effective use of highway and transit funds.**