

Chairman Hal Rogers
House Committee on Appropriations
Fiscal Year 2014 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Bill
Full Committee Mark Up
June 27, 2013
Opening Statement As Prepared

This meeting will come to order.

Thank you all for being here again today. I know that this has been a busy week, and we are all anticipating the upcoming district work period, so I appreciate your time and continued participation today.

The first item before us for consideration is the Fiscal Year 2014 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Bill.

—

I'll begin by thanking you both for getting this bill before the Committee today. I also want to thank the entire Subcommittee and the staff for their input and time in crafting this legislation. While I am sure this process was no walk in the park, you all have done a fine job, and I commend you for your efforts.

The final product of your hard work is before us today – as what I think is a good bill that achieves what it is supposed to do: support infrastructure critical to our economy; protect our people as they fly, drive, and move around this country; and provide housing for hundreds of thousands of vulnerable citizens.

The fiscal year 2014 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development funding bill does all this while dealing with the fiscal constraints of sequestration and an unbalanced budget - making difficult but necessary reductions to a variety of lower-priority programs. But this bill makes these cuts without risking the safety of our people, doing undue harm to our economy, and keeps roofs over the heads of our vulnerable citizens.

We focused \$15.3 billion in investments on transportation projects and programs that are essential to the continued economic growth of our nation, that will contribute to efficient and successful American commerce, and that will preserve the safety and quality of life of American communities. This funding level will also fulfill the MAP-21 transportation authorization levels for highways and transit.

To ensure the safety of our airways and efficiency of our airports, we provided funding to keep the air traffic control system fully operational – without any need for furloughs. Full funding is also provided to continue upgrades being made to airports to ease future congestion and reduce delays as part of the NextGen program as deployed.

To keep our most vulnerable individuals and families with roofs over their heads, this bill provides all of the funding needed to continue assistance for families who will hold vouchers for Section 8 housing at the beginning of the fiscal year. Housing for veterans, the disabled, and the elderly is fully funded as well.

But we simply can't have it all in an austere budget year like this. This bill is an example of the trade-offs we must make to meet our fiscal constraints and reduce our deficit. To maintain funding for vital government programs and services, cuts had to be made to other programs, like Amtrak, Community Development Block Grants, and the HOME program. Unnecessary or simply "nice-to-have" programs like high-speed rail, the TIGER grant program, and "sustainable" or "green" community development programs receive no funding.

The end result of these cuts, though, is a bill that adequately supports the most important programs – programs that I know my colleagues on both sides of the aisle support and view as necessary to the continued safety and success of this nation.

I believe this bill makes the difficult but right choices to protect our most urgent safety and infrastructure needs while acknowledging our limited resources. This is a good, solid piece of legislation. I ask the Committee to vote "yes" on this bill so we can ensure these programs have the funding they need come October 1.

#####