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September 19, 2018

Congress Introduces Continuing Resolution Through December 7

On September 13, the House Appropriations Committee filed a House-Senate bipartisan agreement on a two-bill “minibus” funding bill for the Departments of Defense, Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (Conference Report on H.R. 6157). For any federal agencies without full-year appropriations enacted (including the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)), the Conference Report includes a short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) to fund these federal agencies at fiscal year (FY) 2018 levels through December 7, 2018, after the midterm elections in November. Congress must enact the CR to keep these agencies operating or they will shut down on October 1, 2018. Yesterday (September 18), the Senate passed the Conference Report (including the CR) by a vote of 93 to 7. The House is expected to consider the bill the week of September 24 and send it to the President prior to October 1.

House-Senate Conference Committee Meets on Transportation Appropriations Minibus

While the CR will delay the deadline to avoid a lapse of funding, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees continue to work to resolve differences in their respective versions of the THUD funding bills for FY 2019. On September 13, the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations convened a meeting of conferees on H.R. 6147, a minibus appropriations package that includes FY 2019 funding for four appropriations bills—Interior and Environment, Financial Services, Agriculture, and Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) Appropriations bills. The meeting can be [viewed here](#). To view the Senate THUD bill, [please click here and see Division D](#). To view the House version of the bill, [please click here](#).

On September 10, APTA President and CEO Paul Skoutelas sent a letter to the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Committees on Appropriations, expressing our positions on several pending funding and policy issues. The letter urged the Committees to:

- Provide the highest possible funding levels for public transportation and intercity passenger rail;
- Increase investments in Buses and Bus Facilities, State of Good Repair, and Urban and Rural formula grants;
- Allow commuter railroads to use Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grants for costs associated with operating and maintaining positive train control (PTC) technology after implementation is complete;
- Ensure that DOT administers the Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program consistent with current law, and require FTA to advance qualified CIG projects in a timely manner; and
- Prohibit DOT from implementing new policies (as outlined in FTA's "Dear Colleague" letter) that would create costly burdens and delay CIG projects.

To view the letter, [please click here](#). To view an APTA table comparing funding levels of the House and Senate THUD bills, [please click here](#).

Federal Transit Administration Announces Funding for Four Capital Investment Grant Projects

On September 6, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced it is allocating \$249 million of appropriated FY 2018 CIG funding for four projects (two New Starts and two Small Starts) in California, Indiana, New Mexico, and Washington. The New Start projects are the Santa Ana and Garden Grove Streetcar with an allocation of \$98,955,409, and the Seattle Lynnwood Link Extension with an allocation of \$100,000,000 of FY 2018 funds. APTA expects FTA to submit Full Funding Grant Agreements for these two projects in the near future. In addition, FTA also announced the final allocation for two Small Starts projects: the Albuquerque Rapid Transit Project (\$25,035,549) and the Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation (IndyGo) Red Line Rapid Transit Project (\$24,989,685).

APTA Testifies on Commuter Railroads' Positive Train Control Implementation

On September 13, Jeffrey D. Knueppel, P.E., General Manager of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) and Chair of APTA's Commuter Rail PTC Subcommittee, testified on behalf of APTA before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials on the state of PTC implementation in the United States.

Reiterating APTA's and the commuter rail industry's commitment to implementing PTC, Knueppel stated that the industry has been "working continuously with freight partners, third-party contractors, Amtrak and FRA to implement PTC and address and correct technical and interoperability challenges."

Knueppel described how each commuter railroad has its own unique and complex operating environment, and PTC systems must be tailored to meet those specific operating requirements, noting how "APTA has actively worked to assist the commuter rail industry with PTC research, development, installation and implementation, including by participating in FRA's Rail Safety Advisory Committee." To view the written testimony, please click [here](#).

APTA Hosts PTC Fly-In

In addition, APTA invited a small group of CEOs and Deputy CEOs of commuter railroads to Washington, DC, to meet with key House and Senate Members of Congress and staff to emphasize the strong and continuous progress of commuter railroads in implementing PTC. Participants included Jeff Knueppel, James Derwinski of Chicago's Metra, Henry Stoppelcamp of Denver RTD, Richard Dalton of Virginia Railway Express, and APTA Government Affairs staff.

The group held meetings with:

- Representative Jeff Denham (R-CA), Chair, Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure;
- Representative Sam Graves (R-MO), Chair, Subcommittee on Highways and Transit of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure;
- Representative Dan Lipinski (D-IL), Senior Member, Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure;
- Representative David Joyce (R-OH), Vice Chair, Subcommittee on THUD of the House Committee on Appropriations;
- Bipartisan staff of the House THUD Appropriations Subcommittee;
- Bipartisan staff of the Senate THUD Appropriations Subcommittee; and
- Bipartisan staff of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.



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