

# House Committee Bill Would Provide 22% Transportation Spending Boost

July 20, 2021

The FY2022 appropriations bill for the Department of Transportation (DOT) was marked up in the House Appropriations Committee on Friday, July 16, as part of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) Appropriations Act, and was combined with six other appropriations bills in House Rules Committee Print [117-12](#) on Monday, July 19. The deadline for proposed amendments to this bill (H.R. 4502) is 5 p.m. on Wednesday, July 21. In light of the short deadline, the analysis below highlights a few of the provisions of the DOT title of the bill.

## *Funding*

The amounts and policies governing the vast majority of the funding in the DOT bill are determined by aviation, maritime, and surface transportation authorization legislation previously enacted by Congress. Surface transportation programs, including highway, transit, passenger rail, and traffic safety programs, are set to expire if not reauthorized by September 30. The House passed its version of a reauthorization bill, the INVEST in America Act (H.R. 3684), on July 1, 2021. In line with the funding increases proposed in that legislation, the Appropriations Committee recommended an increase of 28% (\$17.2 billion) in funding drawn from the Highway Trust Fund, primarily for highway and transit projects, and an increase of 6% (\$1.5 billion) in discretionary funding, for a total of \$105.7 billion for FY2022. The increased Highway Trust Fund money would be dependent on enactment of H.R. 3684 or other legislation that would provide additional resources to the Highway Trust Fund to support that level of expenditure.

## *Environmental Issues*

The House Appropriations Committee report accompanying the THUD bill (not yet numbered, available at <https://docs.house.gov/meetings/AP/AP00/20210716/113895/HMKP-117-AP00-20210716-SD004.pdf>) says that the transportation sector is responsible for an estimated 30% of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. Most of these emissions come from cars, trucks, and buses. The bill would provide \$240 million to local transit agencies for the acquisition of low- and no-emission buses on top of funding available through transit formula funds; \$20 million for a zero-emission passenger ferry program; and \$100 million for a new “Thriving Communities” grant for projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide sustainable infrastructure in communities that have disproportionate rates of pollution and

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economic need. Environmental considerations are also mentioned in regard to several other programs in the bill, which also provides \$11 million for DOT to purchase electric vehicles and provide charging infrastructure for its fleet.

### ***The RAISE Discretionary Grant Program***

The bill would increase funding for the national infrastructure investment program (popularly known as the RAISE discretionary grant program, previously called TIGER and then BUILD) from \$1.0 billion in FY2021 to \$1.2 billion in FY2022, including \$40 million for planning grants. This program is popular in part because it is one of the few discretionary transportation grant programs that offer communities an opportunity to get federal funding directly for local projects, and in part because virtually any transportation project eligible for federal funding is eligible for a grant under this program. The House Appropriations Committee commended DOT for revising the selection criteria for the FY2021 round of grants to include climate change, environmental justice, and racial equity considerations, and directed it to do likewise in FY2022.

### ***Earmarked Projects***

The FY2022 appropriations cycle is the first since FY2010 in which the House Appropriations Committee has provided for members of Congress to direct funding to specific projects in their communities. The committee published a list of the requested projects it recommended for funding with the amount and the name of the member (or members) requesting each project in the committee report at <https://appropriations.house.gov/sites/democrats.appropriations.house.gov/files/documents/FY22%20THUD%20Funded%20CPF.pdf>.

### ***Highway Safety***

The Committee recommended an increase of 37% (\$232 million) in highway safety grants to states, divided between formula safety grants and national priority safety incentive grant programs. This increased funding would be drawn from the Highway Trust Fund and is thus dependent on additional legislation, as noted above.

### ***Passenger Rail***

The committee recommended an increase of 46% (\$1.3 billion) in funding for passenger rail, including grants to Amtrak and to states for improvements of rail service.

### ***Electronic Logging Device Waiver for Commercial Livestock Haulers***

Congress mandated that most commercial trucks be equipped with electronic logging devices (ELDs) starting in 2018. These devices, which replaced handwritten logbooks truckers were formerly required to maintain, were intended to improve highway safety by improving adherence to (and enforcement of) federal limits on the amount of time that commercial truck drivers can drive each day. Haulers of livestock have objected that stricter enforcement of these hours-of-service regulations complicates their work, as their live cargo can require additional handling with associated risk of injury in the event a driver reaches the limits of permitted driving time before reaching the destination. Congress has repeatedly banned enforcement of the ELD mandate for livestock haulers each year since the implementation of the mandate; H.R. 4502 would extend that ban for another year.

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