



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

Thad Cochran of Mississippi, Chairman

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 25, 2015

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FY2016 TRANSPORTATION, HUD APPROPRIATIONS BILL APPROVED BY SENATE COMMITTEE

*Provides Investments & Flexibility for a Safer Transportation Network,
While Preserving Housing Assistance for the Most Vulnerable Families*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Senate Committee on Appropriations today approved the FY2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) Appropriations Bill, making the \$55.65 billion measure available for Senate consideration.

The bill, approved 20-10, includes funding for the Department of Transportation, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and other related agencies. Working within the framework of the Budget Control Act, the bill provides funding for transportation and infrastructure priorities, and endeavors to increase the efficiency and affordability of federal housing programs.

The measure recommends \$40.26 billion for federal-aid highway programs and increases funding for U.S. aviation, rail safety and the nation’s ports and intermodal water and land transportation. The bill also adds funding for housing for the most vulnerable while improving the efficiency of these programs.

“The American economy relies on the effectiveness of our infrastructure, which makes this legislation important. The demands for more infrastructure investment are significant. The budget requires us to set priorities and this Senate bill makes those choices and focuses on using the taxpayer money wisely,” said **U.S. Senator Thad Cochran (R-Miss.)**, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee. “I commend Senators Collins and Reed for putting together a thoughtful bill that I recommend to the Senate for consideration.”

“Through negotiation and compromise, this bipartisan bill makes smart investments in our nation’s infrastructure, helps meet the housing needs of the most vulnerable among us, and provides funding for economic development projects in our communities,” said **U.S. Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine)**, chairman of the Senate Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Subcommittee. “From rental assistance for low-income families to safety-related provisions for our transportation infrastructure, the many critical programs funded by this bill were balanced to fund the wide range of operations that play a crucial role in reinvigorating our economy.”

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Highlights of the Senate FY2016 THUD Appropriations Bill:

The Senate bill provides \$55.65 billion in discretionary spending, a \$1.88 billion increase above FY2015 and \$7 billion below the President's budget request. Given reduced offsets caused primarily by a \$1.1 billion decline in Federal Housing Administration receipts and a \$2.3 billion increase in the cost of maintaining existing rental housing vouchers, the overall Senate bill actually represents a decrease of \$1.9 billion below current levels. The measure disregards gimmicks in the administration's request that would have shifted certain accounts from discretionary to mandatory spending.

U.S. Department of Transportation

The bill includes \$17.78 billion in FY2016 discretionary appropriations for the Department of Transportation, \$17 million below the FY2015 enacted level and \$3.9 billion below the President's request (disregarding the administration request to shift certain programs from discretionary to mandatory spending). Within this amount, funding is prioritized on programs to make the transportation systems safe, efficient, and reliable.

TIGER Grants – \$500 million, equal to the FY2015 enacted level, for TIGER grants (also known as National Infrastructure Investments).

Highway Trust Fund – \$40.26 billion, equal to the FY2015 enacted level, from the Highway Trust Fund to be spent on the Federal-aid Highways Program, contingent on the enactment of new transportation authorization legislation. The bill also frees up to \$2.4 billion in old, unused earmarks for infrastructure projects that can be spent on other important transportation projects.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) – \$16 billion in total budgetary resources for the FAA, \$294 million above the FY2015 enacted level and \$175 million above the request. This will provide full funding for all air traffic control personnel, including 14,500 air traffic controllers, and more than 25,000 engineers, maintenance technicians, safety inspectors, and operational support personnel.

The bill also makes investments in the FAA Next Generation Air Transportation Systems (NextGen) and the Contract Towers program to help ease future congestion and to help reduce delays for travelers in U.S. airspace. In addition, the bill rejects the administration's proposals for new passenger facility charge fees and transfer authority.

Federal Railroad Administration – \$1.68 billion, an increase of \$53 million above the FY2015 enacted level. This includes \$289 million for Amtrak operations and continued service for all current routes, and \$1.1 billion for capital grants. The bill also provides an additional \$17 million for the Northeast Corridor and promotes necessary reforms to Amtrak.

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Rail Safety and Research Programs – \$288 million, \$12 million above the FY2015 enacted level for rail safety and research programs, including inspectors and training to help ensure the safety of passengers and local communities. The bill also allows \$50 million for rail safety grants, to support implementation of Positive Train Control (PTC), enhance passenger rail safety, and reduce highway-rail grade crossings incidents.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) – \$10.5 billion, \$424 million below the FY2015 enacted level, for the FTA. Transit formula grants total \$8.6 billion, which is contingent on the enactment of new transportation authorization legislation, as the current authorization expires this year. This funding level is consistent with the MAP-21 authorization legislation.

The bill provides a total of \$1.6 billion for Capital Investment Grants (“New Starts”), fully funding all current “Full Funding Grant Agreement” (FFGA) transit projects as well as new projects. Also \$75 million is provided for core capacity projects and \$30 million for Small Starts projects--competitive grant funding for major transit capital investments – including rapid rail, light rail, bus rapid transit, and commuter rail – that are planned and operated by local communities.

U.S. Maritime Administration – \$373 million, \$32 million above the FY2015 enacted level, for the Maritime Administration to increase the productivity, efficiency and safety of the nation’s ports and intermodal water and land transportation. The Maritime Security Program is funded at the authorized level of \$186 million. The bill includes \$33 million for State Maritime Academies, including \$5 million to develop a replacement vessel for the six SMA training ships. These training ships are essential to continuing a strong merchant marine workforce.

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration – \$825 million in total budgetary resources for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, including an increase in funding for the Office of Defects Investigation to address concerns with vehicle recalls.

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration – \$572 million for the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. The report includes several key safety provisions, including a requirement that the Department complete its final rule on Electronic Logging Devices and its proposed rule on Speed Limiters.

Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration – \$246 million for the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration to address safety concerns related to recent pipeline and crude oil by rail accidents. The bill includes language that will help develop web-based curriculum for local emergency responders.

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U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

The legislation includes a total of \$37.56 billion for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), an increase of nearly \$2 billion above the FY2015 enacted level and \$3 billion below the request.

Community Planning and Development – \$5.6 billion, \$1.1 billion below the FY2015 enacted level, for Community Planning and Development programs. The Community Development Block Grant formula program is funded at \$2.9 billion and the Homeless Assistance Grants are funded at \$2.2 billion. The bill contains \$330 million for the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program and ensures that funds are better targeted to communities with the highest burden of HIV cases by preventing HUD from counting deceased individuals when determining formula allocations for grantees.

Emphasis on Youth Homelessness – The bill includes several provisions to expand and improve the delivery of HUD housing and services for homeless youth, including \$20 million to support more than 2,500 new family unification vouchers to prevent youth exiting foster care from becoming homeless. An additional \$40 million is provided to test comprehensive efforts to end youth homelessness in urban and rural areas.

Moving-to-Work Expansion – The bill permits an additional 300 public housing agencies to participate in the program, which will enable innovative approaches to reduce the cost of housing assistance, improve program efficiency, and promote family self-sufficiency.

Section 8 and Public Housing – \$27 billion for Public and Indian Housing, \$600 million increase above the FY2015 enacted level and \$1.7 billion below the budget request. This funding will continue assistance to all families and individuals currently served by these programs.

Preserving Rental Assistance – Other assisted-housing programs within the bill are funded at \$11.46 billion, an increase of \$1.1 billion above the FY 2015 enacted level. The bulk of this increase is needed to provide a full year of funding on all project-based rental assistance contracts and continue assistance to all those currently served by these programs. Included in this amount is \$420 million in new funding for Housing for the Elderly, which is equal to the FY2015 enacted level, and \$137 million for Housing for Persons with Disabilities, an increase of \$2 million above the FY2015 enacted level.

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