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United States General Accounting Office
Washington, DC 20548

August 17, 2001

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman, Subcommittee on Transportation
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives

Subject: Highway Projects: Extent of Unobligated Balances for Demonstration Projects

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Congress has provided funding for numerous highway demonstration projects in legislation authorizing surface transportation programs as well as in annual appropriations acts for the Department of Transportation (DOT). In some cases, the projects are identified in the legislation itself. In others, they are identified in committee reports accompanying the legislation, or by DOT. These projects are all designated for specific locations within states and for specific purposes, and funds made available for them generally remain available until expended. In order to identify funds that could be rescinded, you asked us to identify (1) highway demonstration projects with unobligated balances that are no longer needed and (2) the amount of these balances.

Results

As of April, 2001, there were 28 highway demonstration projects with unobligated balances that are no longer needed by the states because, according to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the projects are completed. These projects accounted for about \$14.6 million in unobligated funds. These funds were provided in authorization or appropriations acts enacted from 1976 through 1994. The enclosure specifies the budget authority made available and the obligated and unobligated amounts for each of the projects as of April 2001, lists the statute(s) and committee report(s) identifying the projects, beginning with the most recent, and describes briefly the location and nature of the completed projects. We provided a draft of this information to your staff on July 10, 2001. Public Law 107-20, enacted on July 24, 2001, rescinded approximately \$16 million in budget authority made available by the statutes we identified in the enclosure.

Our work did not identify the actions FHWA takes to identify completed highway demonstration projects with unobligated balances so that funds associated with them could be rescinded. We intend to follow up on this issue to determine whether FHWA should establish a process for identifying completed projects on a regular basis.

Scope and Methodology

To identify completed highway demonstration projects with unobligated balances, we analyzed reports from DOT's financial management information system (FMIS) and verified our analysis with FHWA officials. We verified the statutory sources of the projects and their descriptions by reviewing the statutes and associated reports. We

relied on FMIS to identify the amount of budget authority and obligated and unobligated amounts for each project and did not independently verify this information. We conducted our review in May 2001 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Agency Comments

We provided DOT with a draft of this letter for review and comment. DOT agreed with the information in the draft letter and provided technical comments, which we incorporated as appropriate.

As agreed with your office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this letter until 30 days after the draft of the report. At that time, we will send copies of this letter to the Secretary of Transportation and the Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration. The letter will also be available on GAO's home page at <http://www.gao.gov>.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact me at (202) 512-2834.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JayEtta Hecker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J" and "H".

JayEtta Hecker
Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues

Enclosure

Summary of Completed Demonstration Projects With Unobligated Balances (as of April 2001)

State	Public law, section, and related report	Project description	Budget authority	Obligations	Unobligated balance
Kansas	Public Law 103-331 (1994) <i>Surface Transportation Projects Conference Report 103-752</i>	I-70/110 th Street interchange, Kansas City, KS.	\$3,846,400	\$3,535,457	\$310,943
Washington	Public Law 103-331 (1994) <i>Surface Transportation Projects Conference Report 103-752</i>	State Road 305 improvements, Bainbridge Island, WA.	672,000	177,109	494,891
Arkansas	Public Law 102-240 (1991) (§1061)	Project to demonstrate the benefits of providing training to county and town traffic officials in the need for and application of uniform traffic control devices and the safety benefits of providing for adequate and safe warning and regulatory signs.	1,200,000	1,194,605	5,395
Illinois	Public Law 102-240 (1991) (§1107(b)(96))	Tamarack Street extension.	585,257	549,777	35,480
Illinois	Public Law 102-240 (1991) (§1106(b)(2)(15))	A project to improve Dolton Avenue between Torrence Avenue and Indiana State Line, Burnham, IL.	1,853,314	1,816,647	36,667
Illinois	Public Law 102-240 (1991) (§1106(a)(2)(31))	Tollway feasibility study, East St. Louis to Carbondale, IL.	312,137	312,073	64
Illinois	Public Law 102-240 (1991) (§1106(a)(2)(34))	Bel-Air Road improvement from south of Carmi to State Route 141 in southeastern White County.	1,755,772	1,713,042	42,730
Illinois	Public Law 102-240 (1991) (§1106(a)(2)(35))	Upgrading Illinois Route 13 in Williamson County, IL.	7,608,343	7,528,343	80,000
Illinois	Public Law 102-240 (1991) (§1108(b)(50))	Interstate 255 Interchange.	3,316,457	3,268,057	48,400
Kentucky	Public Law 102-240 (1991) (§1106(a)(2)(99))	US 27 improvements, Jessamine County, KY.	8,973,943	8,887,389	86,554
Michigan	Public Law 102-240 (1991) (§1107(b)(53))	Widen and improve pavement in Mundy Township, from Baldwin Road to Cook Road.	156,069	129,343	26,726

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State	Public law, section, and related report	Project description	Budget authority	Obligations	Unobligated balance
New York	Public Law 102-240 (1991) (§1107(b)(200))	A study of the feasibility of rehabilitation of the South Washington Street Bridge in Binghamton, NY, to identify plans and specifications for repair if feasible.	487,714	200,235	287,479
New York	Public Law 102-240 (1991) (§1106(b)(2)(12))	New York State Thruway relocation study, Buffalo (Niagara), NY.	234,103	202,100	32,003
New York	Public Law 102-240 (1991) (§1104(b)(13))	Construct turning lanes, sign upgrades, traffic signal interconnections, and road repair and resurfacing.	2,048,400	1,613,470	434,930
Pennsylvania	Public Law 102-240 (1991) (§1107(b)(21))	For safety improvements on the Narrows to eliminate potential problems brought on by rockslides.	1,560,685	1,394,309	166,376
Pennsylvania	Public Law 102-240 (1991) (§1107(b)(110))	Jacobs Timber Bridge over Greater Trough Creek.	341,400	247,744	93,656
Ohio	Public Law 102-143 (1991) <i>Highway Demonstration Projects Conference Report 102-243</i> Public Law 102-240 (1991) (§1104(b)(21))	Ohio Railroad-highway corridor studies (6). Conduct study of possible safety and traffic delay improvement benefits in six corridors.	474,103	240,000	234,103
West Virginia	Public Law 102-143 (1991) <i>Feasibility, Design, Environmental, Engineering Conference Report 102-243</i>	West Virginia, Route No. 2, feasibility, design, environmental, and preliminary engineering studies.	2,080,000	1,921,598	158,402
Wyoming	Public Law 102-143 (1991) <i>Highway Demonstration Projects Conference Report 102-243</i>	Chief Joseph Highway.	4,800,000	4,710,869	89,131

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State	Public law, section, and related report	Project description	Budget authority	Obligations	Unobligated balance
West Virginia	<p>Public Law 101-516 (1990) <i>Highway Demonstration Projects – Preliminary Engineering Conference Report 101-892</i></p> <p>Public Law 103-211 (1994) – rescinded a portion of the funds that had been made available for the project.</p>	Ohio-West Virginia highway (Ohio Route 35 and a routing to be determined in West Virginia).	103,080	99,674	3,406
Connecticut	Public Law 100-17 (1987) (§149(a)(36))	<p>Two demonstration projects:</p> <p>Southington: A highway project to demonstrate the latest construction techniques in reconstructing a north-south segment of highway on the federal-aid urban system in the vicinity of Southington.</p> <p>Kent Center: A highway project to change horizontal and vertical alignment of a north-south highway on the federal-aid primary system south of Kent Center to demonstrate methods of solving safety and flooding problems.</p>	6,332,002	4,100,748	2,231,254
Kansas	Public Law 100-17 (1987) (§149(a)(72))	A highway project in Douglas County, KS, to demonstrate methods of reducing traffic congestion and facilitating the usage by motorists on the Interstate System of recreational facilities by construction of a limited access road approximately 14 miles long.	7,180,197	7,179,900	297
Kansas	Public Law 100-17 (1987) (§149(a)(86))	A project to construct an interchange at 119 th Street and Interstate Route I-35 in the City of Olathe, KS.	20,742,502	20,732,763	9,739

Enclosure I

State	Public law, section, and related report	Project description	Budget authority	Obligations	Unobligated balance
Maryland	Public Law 100-17 (1987) (§149(a)(93))	A project to realign an intersection to tie Maryland Route 162 directly into Poplar Avenue.	2,467,013	2,168,664	298,349
Ohio	Public Law 100-17 (1987) (§149(a)(27))	Wood County, OH: A highway project to construct an interchange connecting Interstate Route I-75 and a 4-lane, east-west highway in Perrysburg Township in Wood County, OH.	15,711,800	7,323,622	8,388,178
Illinois	Public Law 97-424 (1983) (§131(j)(1)) Public Law 104-59 (1995) – rescinded a portion of the funds that had been made available for the project.	A demonstration project for the purpose of demonstrating the benefits of constructing usable segments of high-volume facilities and developing methods to achieve the effective implementation of massive capital investments made under federal programs that are being discontinued.	98,126,299	97,663,821	462,478
Colorado	Public Law 95-599 (1978) (§150)	Access control demonstration projects designed to demonstrate whether preserving the capacity of existing highways to move traffic safely by acquiring and controlling the right of access to such a highway is a cost-effective alternative to the construction of additional highways. The Department of Transportation selected demonstration projects in Arkansas, Colorado, and New Hampshire.	10,500,000	10,427,089	72,911
Pennsylvania	Public Law 94-280 (1976) (§141) House Report 94-716	Everett by-pass (PA US 30).	24,160,282	23,693,917	466,365
Total			\$227,629,272	\$213,032,365	\$14,596,907

Note: Budget authority, obligations, and unobligated balances are rounded to the nearest \$1.00.

Source: Adapted from information provided by the Federal Highway Administration.

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