



## U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

*PRESS RELEASE*

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### **SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE CLEARS FY 2008 TRANSPORTATION-HUD APPROPRIATIONS LEGISLATION Full Committee Mark**

Washington, DC – The Senate Appropriations Committee today unanimously approved Fiscal Year 2008 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies legislation that makes key investments in the nation's highway systems, securing the nation's pipelines and railways, and providing housing services for those in need, the elderly, and veterans.

The legislation allocates a total of \$104.6 billion for the Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration, and for Housing and Urban Development. More than \$40 billion are invested in the nation's highway system for construction of new roads, repairs and improvements. The funds will also create tens of thousands of new jobs, giving the national economy an additional boost. Also included in the legislation is more than \$3.5 billion for airport grants, \$110 million to provide access to air travel in rural communities, and over \$200 million to improve pipeline and rail safety. Securing the nation's pipelines and railways will strengthen homeland security and prevent disruptions in the delivery of essential resources such as oil and gas.

"Today, the Appropriations Committee has passed, by a vote of 29-0, legislation that makes essential investments in our nation's transportation system, housing, and community development. By looking toward the future and investing in our nation's highway, rail, and air travel infrastructure, we will help open the door to new investments and job opportunities throughout the nation. Modernizing our roads, especially those in rural areas, will help to strengthen and grow America's economy. Providing housing for homeless veterans and the elderly poor are moral imperatives for our nation. I am very pleased with the bill that the subcommittee has crafted under Senator Murray's leadership," said Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Robert C. Byrd, D-W.Va.

"This bill moves America forward by making transportation safer and more efficient. It improves air travel, expands public transit in urban and rural areas,

invests in research and safety, and creates more affordable housing. At a time when budgets are tight and needs are numerous, we have provided funding that will bolster our economy, improve safety, and build our nation's infrastructure," said Senator Patty Murray, D-WA, Chairman of the Senate Transportation-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee.

The FY 2008 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) bill includes provisions for the following:

### **Bill Total**

Total: **\$104.6 billion**, **\$5.3 billion** more than FY 2007, and **\$4.4 billion** more than the President's request.

### **DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

**\$65.7 billion**, **\$2.57 billion** more than FY 2007, and **\$1.24 billion** more than the President's request.

**Highway Construction:** **\$40.2 billion**, **\$1.1 billion** over FY 2007, and **\$630 million** over the President's request to improve road conditions and bring an additional 30,000 new jobs into the economy.

**Amtrak:** **\$1.47 billion**, **\$176 million** over FY 2007, and **\$570 million** over the President's request. The Senate rejected the President's budget proposal, which would have guaranteed Amtrak's bankruptcy. In an era of record gas prices and congested highways, Amtrak plays a vital role in our national transportation system. Last year, Amtrak posted a record ridership of 24.3 million passengers. The bill provides Amtrak with the funding necessary to continue all current services and improve railway infrastructure.

- Includes \$100 million for a new grant program that will match state contributions for intercity passenger rail operations. The program is similar but not identical to a \$100 million program that was included in the President's budget.
- The bill also includes language that prohibits Amtrak from moving any of its jobs overseas.

**Rail Safety:** Includes **\$155.2 million** for investments in innovative technology to improve the safety of transporting hazardous chemicals by rail.

**Pipeline Safety:** **\$82.4 million**, **\$8 million** above the President's request to improve the oversight of pipelines. Pipeline accidents threaten safety and harm the environment. They can also disrupt our supply of essential resources like oil, as happened last year from a series of pipeline leaks in Alaska.

**Essential Air Service:** \$110 million, \$600,000 over FY 2007 and \$60 million more than the President's request to restore funding to support air service in rural communities. The President's request would eliminate air service for many communities that rely on this program for access to air transportation.

### **FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION**

\$14.94 Billion, \$250 million more than FY 2007, and \$863 million more than the President's request.

**Airport Grants:** \$3.51 billion, equal to FY 2007, and \$765 million above the President's request and The Committee has rejected the Administration's proposed 22 percent cut in funding for airport grants. This program pays for infrastructure needs at airports across the nation. Investments include the expansion of airport capacity, critical safety improvements, and noise mitigation efforts.

**Air Safety Inspectors:** Provides an increase of \$37 million over the President's request for retaining and hiring additional air safety inspectors.

**Air Traffic Control Modernization:** Provides \$55 million above the President's request to expedite deployment of the next generation of air traffic control equipment.

### **HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

\$38.75 billion, \$2.12 billion more than the FY 2007 enacted level, and \$3.15 billion more than the President's request.

**Community Development Block Grants:** \$3.77 billion, equal to FY 2007 and \$735 million above the President's request. The Administration's budget proposed to reform and reduce the Community Development Block Grant program by \$735 million (20 percent). Investments made in the Community CDBG program are essential to community development and housing infrastructure in States and communities across the nation.

**Housing for the low-income elderly:** \$735 million, equal to FY 2007, and \$160 million above the President's request. The President has proposed to cut the program by 22 percent.

**Support for Homeless Veterans:** The Senate provides \$75 million in new vouchers for homeless veterans including those returning from Iraq. This assistance will be made available through a joint HUD . VA program that combines housing assistance from HUD with medical assistance and other supportive services from the VA.

**Hope VI:** \$100 Million, \$1 million above FY 2007, and \$100 million above the President's budget request. The Senate rejected the President's proposal to

eliminate the program. The Hope VI program revitalizes neighborhoods by replacing outdated public housing in disrepair with new mixed-income housing.

**Housing for the Disabled:** \$237 million, equal to FY 2007, and \$112 million above the President's request. The President's budget proposed to slash housing funding for the disabled by \$112 million. The Subcommittee has rejected this cut and is freezing funds at the current year's level.

**Lead Hazard Reduction:** \$157.14 million, \$6 million above FY 2007, and \$41 million over the President's budget request to protect children against hazards such as lead paint and mold.

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