

RESEARCH AND INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY ADMINISTRATION

The Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA) was established as an administration within the Department of Transportation (DOT) effective November 30, 2004, pursuant to the Norman Y. Mineta Research and Special Programs Improvement Act, Public Law 108-426. The mission of RITA is to provide strategic clarity to DOT's multi-modal and intermodal research efforts, while coordinating the multifaceted research agenda of the department.

RITA coordinates, facilitates, and reviews the following research and development programs and activities: advancement and research and development of innovative technologies, including intelligent transportation systems: education and training in transportation and transportation-related fields, including the University Transportation Centers and the Transportation Safety Institute: and activities of the Volpe National Transportation Center.

Also included within RITA is the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS), which is funded from the Federal Highway Administration's federal-aid highway account. BTS compiles, analyzes and makes accessible information on the nation's transportation system: collects information on intermodal transportation and other areas as needed: and enhances the quality and effectiveness of the statistical programs of the DOT through research, the development of guidelines, and the promotion of improvements in data acquisition and use.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Appropriation, fiscal year 2006	\$5,716,260
Budget request, fiscal year 2007	8,217,000
Recommended in the bill	6,367,000
Bill compared with:	
Appropriation, fiscal year 2006	+650,740
Budget request, fiscal year 2007	-1,850,000

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The bill includes \$6,367,000 to continue research and development activities in fiscal year 2007. This funding level is sufficient to fund 33 full time equivalent staff years (FTE), an increase of 5 FTE over the fiscal year 2006 level.

Transportation futures program – The Committee denies RITA's request of \$2,228,000 for the transportation futures and applied technology program. The Committee believes that RITA should develop a more robust level of in-house research, development and technology expertise before it relies on outside contractors for multi-modal research coordination and analysis.

Research Programs – Within the fiscal year 2007 recommended funding level, the Committee provides \$1,120,000 provided for RITA’s research, development, and technology (RD&T) programs as follows:

Hazardous materials research and development (R&D)	\$80,000
Hydrogen fuels safety R&D	500,000
RD&T coordination	540,000

The Committee recommends that the \$1,120,000 provided for these RD&T programs is available until September 30, 2009.

The bill also includes language that allows funds received from states, counties, municipalities, other public authorities, and private sources for expenses incurred for training to be credited to this appropriation

BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION STATISTICS

(LIMITATION ON OBLIGATIONS)

Appropriation, fiscal year 2006	(\$26,730,000)
Budget request, fiscal year 2007	(27,000,000)
Recommended in the bill	(27,000,000)
Bill compared with:	
Appropriation, fiscal year 2006	(+270,000)
Budget request, fiscal year 2007	---

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Under the appropriation of the Federal Highway Administration, the bill provides \$27,000,000 for BTS. In addition, BTS will receive a portion of the revenue aligned budget authority (RABA) increase to the federal-aid highway program in fiscal year 2007.

The Committee limits BTS staff to 122 FTE in fiscal year 2007 in order to curtail the significant growth in staffing that occurred previously within this agency.