



House Panel Passes \$2.8 Billion Highway Funding Boost

On May 16, the House Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Subcommittee approved legislation that would provide a record \$49.5 billion in federal highway investment and exceed authorized funding levels for the transit and airport construction programs.

The measure builds on the two-year budget agreement reached in March by the Trump administration and bipartisan congressional leaders to significantly increase domestic and defense discretionary spending in FY 2018 and FY 2019. The pact enabled the FY 2018 government-wide spending package signed into law on March 22 to add close to \$5 billion in General Fund supplemental transportation spending. The FY 2019 House bill adds \$4.25 billion from the General Fund for federal highway programs to the \$45.27 billion authorized as part of the 2015 FAST Act surface transportation law.

The resulting \$49.5 billion in highway investment would be a 14.4 percent increase in two years and a \$9 billion increase since 2015 enactment of the FAST Act.

Federal transit and aviation construction programs would also receive increases. Transit capital programs would see a \$310 million addition to the FAST Act approved funding level of \$2.3 billion. This is in contrast to the Trump administration's FY 2019 budget proposal to zero out funding for this program. Furthermore, the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) current funding level of \$3.35 billion would be augmented by an additional \$500 million.

The popular TIGER Grant program, a discretionary multimodal program administered by the U.S. DOT and renamed by the Trump administration as BUILD grants, would receive \$750 million under the House bill. This would be a decrease of \$750 million from FY 2018 level of \$1.5 billion.

This chart details and compares previous years and authorized levels.

Core Transportation Construction Programs				
Program	FY 2017 - Enacted	FY 2018 - Enacted	FY 2019 - House	\$ Increase FY 2017 to FY 2019
<i>(in billions)</i>				
FAST Act - Highway (HTF)	\$43.27	\$44.23	\$45.27	
Additional General Fund		\$2.53	\$4.25	
Total - Highways	\$43.27	\$46.76	\$49.52	\$6.25
FAST Act Transit Capital (General Fund)	\$2.30	\$2.30	\$2.30	
Additional General Fund	\$0.20	\$0.35	\$0.31	
Total - Transit Capital	\$2.50	\$2.65	\$2.61	\$0.11
AIP (Aviation Trust Fund)	\$3.35	\$3.35	\$3.35	
Additional General Fund		\$1.00	\$0.50	
Total - AIP	\$3.35	\$4.35	\$3.85	\$0.50
TIGER Grant Program (General Fund)	\$0.50	\$1.50	\$0.75	\$0.25

The passage of the bill by the subcommittee begins the months-long process to finalize FY 2019 funding for the federal transportation programs. While both the House and Senate have pledged to pass appropriations bills individually rather than in large packages—as has been the recent norm—chances of most getting through the House and Senate before FY 2019 begins on Oct. 1 are slim.

Source - ARTBA