



AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES

A New Surface Transportation Program

ISSUE

Congress needs to enact a new six-year surface transportation program to replace SAFETEA LU this year that includes robust funding coupled with reforms that improve the delivery of projects to the public. Enactment of a long-term program is essential to giving the states the financial certainty necessary to commit to the major transportation improvements that our country needs.

Maintaining and improving transportation infrastructure is vital to economic recovery and long-term productivity. Businesses depend on reliable shipments and access to goods and markets to be competitive. Travelers rely on safe highways and dependable transit systems. Americans value the freedom of mobility that our nation's historic transportation investments have made possible.

Unfortunately, budget forecasts show a \$57 billion projected deficit between current spending levels and revenues flowing into the Highway Trust Fund over the next six years. According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, simply maintaining current funding levels will only worsen persistent problems of congested roads, deficient bridges and overburdened transit systems.

Two blue ribbon commissions created by Congress highlighted the significant gap between current revenues and what is necessary to maintain and improve our surface transportation systems. The commissions identified a menu of financing options to bridge the gap, as well as programmatic reforms supported by the engineering industry, such as consolidating various federal transportation programs, integrating planning and environmental reviews, eliminating duplicative steps, and simplifying regulatory requirements.

KEY POINTS

- *Congress needs to pass a long-term highway and transit program this year in order to meet the nation's transportation needs and support sustained economic growth.*
- *Current funding levels are inadequate for even basic maintenance of the current system, and far from what is needed to make significant improvements.* The U.S. DOT estimates that we need to invest \$105.6 billion annually simply to bring our roads and bridges to a state of good repair, and \$174.6 billion annually to go beyond and achieve meaningful performance improvements, such as added capacity and reduced congestion.
- *It takes too long and costs too much to deliver transportation projects.* Major highway projects can take 12-14 years from inception to completion because of burdensome review and permitting requirements, delays which dramatically escalate the total cost of the project.
- *Engaging the engineering industry is essential to better project delivery.* America's engineering firms bring the innovation and expertise needed help DOTs deliver projects to the public faster, better and with savings to the taxpayer.

ACTION REQUESTED

- Support a full six-year authorization bill with adequate funding levels supported by stable financing mechanisms, including a greater utilization of private capital, and programmatic reforms to deliver projects more efficiently.
- Protect and strengthen procurement of private engineering services; oppose government in-sourcing efforts.