

Subcommittee on Highways & Transit

John J. Duncan, Jr., Chairman

The Subcommittee has jurisdiction over our nation's highway, transit, and highway safety programs, as well as the policy that governs how highway and transit projects are planned, approved, and constructed.

One of the Committee's highest priorities in the 112th Congress is enacting a fiscally responsible **long-term surface transportation law** that includes funding and policy for the federal highway, transit, and highway safety programs. The last such law expired in October 2009, and under Democrat leadership in Congress and the Administration, the programs have continued to operate under a series of short-term extensions.

The unpredictability associated with operating under short-term extensions has caused state DOTs and public transit agencies to delay major construction projects, robbing the U.S. economy of thousands of new jobs that are needed to get our economy back on track.

The Committee is committed to a surface transportation law for the nation that includes the following priorities:

Stabilizing the Highway Trust Fund: The federal gas tax that funds our nation's surface transportation programs is becoming more and more obsolete every day. As our cars and trucks become more fuel efficient we use less fuel, resulting in less revenue coming into the Highway Trust Fund. Increasing the gas tax is not the solution to addressing our infrastructure needs. While we consider sustainable ways to fund these programs in the future, in the short term we must consolidate and reform the surface transportation programs and eliminate programmatic waste so that federal Highway Trust Fund revenues are spent on programs and projects that are truly in the federal interest.

Doing More with Less & Better Leveraging our Revenue Sources: The federal government and states need to do more with less and better leverage existing revenue sources. We need to provide states the flexibility they need to address their unique transportation challenges by establishing innovative financing options. In addition, we must improve program efficiency and identify any idle funding in transportation programs to put it to better use. Finally, in order to maximize the potential of our resources, we must define parameters and take advantage of private sector expertise and capital in improving our infrastructure and helping to create jobs.

Cutting Red Tape & Expediting Projects – The 437 Day Plan: It takes an average of seven years to obtain all of the approvals necessary to begin a standard highway construction project. That is seven years before a shovel even goes in the ground. We must eliminate unnecessary bureaucratic red tape so that infrastructure projects can be built in half the time and taxpayer funds can be spent more efficiently. If we can rebuild

the I-35W bridge that collapsed in Minneapolis-St. Paul within 437 days, we can expedite projects across the nation. (*more information*)

Other Issues

National Strategic Transportation Plan: Not since President Eisenhower's vision for the Interstate Highway System in the 1950's has the nation had a comprehensive strategic plan for our transportation system. We must consider a national strategic transportation plan that will allow the federal government to establish a cost effective strategic vision for our nation's transportation system and better determine how to best utilize our limited resources.

Public Transit Safety: Public transportation is the safest form of passenger transportation, yet the Obama Administration has proposed creating a new federal bureaucracy to oversee transit safety. We can provide additional tools and resources to states and local governments to continue to improve oversight of their local transit systems without creating a new federal agency and increasing the size of government.