

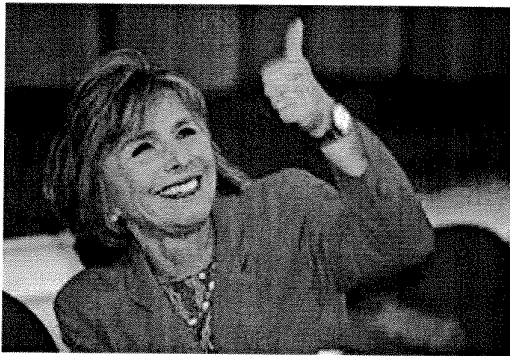
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## Senate Transportation Bill, MAP-21, Freezes Spending at Current Levels

by [Tanya Snyder](#) on May 25, 2011

*Note: See follow-up post, "[Boxer: Transpo Funding Will Rise in Senate Bill, Bike/Ped Will Be Preserved](#)" for updates, including clarification that the new bill will fund transportation at current levels plus inflation and an expanded TIFIA program.*

The Environment and Public Works Committee just released an outline of some core principles of its transportation reauthorization bill. In a statement, the top Republicans and Democrats of both the full committee and the Transportation Subcommittee – Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA), James Inhofe (R-OK), Max Baucus (D-MT) and David Vitter (R-LA) – said:



Sen. Barbara Boxer indicates the Senate transportation bill will hold spending to current levels, hints it will be a short-term bill. Photo: [Bumpshack](#)

It is no secret that the four of us represent very different political views, but we have found common ground in the belief that building highways, bridges, and transportation systems is an important responsibility of the federal government, in cooperation with state and local governments and the private sector.

They say their bill, called Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21):

- Funds programs at current levels to maintain and modernize our critical transportation infrastructure;
- Eliminates earmarks;
- Consolidates numerous programs to focus resources on key national goals and reduce duplicative and wasteful programs;
- Consolidates numerous programs into a more focused freight program that will improve the movement of goods;

- Creates a new section called America Fast Forward, which strengthens the TIFIA program to stretch federal dollars further than they have been stretched before; and
- Expedites project delivery without sacrificing the environment or the rights of people to be heard.

Nothing about an infrastructure bank, which is likely still a major sticking point. We'll also be interested in hearing more about their decisions about transportation enhancements – those “beautification” projects the Republicans love to rail against, also known as bike and pedestrian infrastructure. We also wonder how much EPW has worked with the Banking and Commerce Committees so far to work out the language on transit and rail.

The joint statement indicates that Boxer may be softening her insistence on a six-year bill. They specifically say, “Our goal is to attain the optimum achievable authorization length depending on the resources available.” Sounds like a two-year bill to me, if they're shooting to maintain current funding levels. And we already know that sounds like a two-year bill to Max Baucus, chair of EPW's Transportation Subcommittee and head of the Finance Committee, which the four senators say they're collaborating with to explore options for the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund without increasing the deficit – i.e., without transfers from the general fund.

We're still not expecting to see a completed bill for a little while... the initial Memorial Day target has been pushed back to “sometime in June.”