

DRIVING AHEAD

VOLUME 5/ISSUE 2, 2009

Official newsletter of the
American Highway Users Alliance

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Save the Date!

Annual Meeting

October 20, 2009

Washington, DC



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FEDERAL FRONT

The Highway Users Fights Anti-Mobility Agenda

With the September 30th expiration date of the current surface transportation bill fast approaching, there is an increased sense of urgency from our members to take action on a new authorization bill. The Highway Users remains committed to supporting and promoting legislation that increases highway funding, protects user fees, prevents shortfalls in the Highway Trust Fund, and reduces waste and bureaucratic delays in project delivery. We have also led calls to reform and establish performance-based standards, reduce waste, and maximize the return on public investment.

However, in the rush to get a new bill enacted, we urge supporters of highway investments to respond to a growing challenge from those who wish to harm our interests. By using seemingly innocuous or even desirable terms, such as “livable communities,” opponents

“ **Extremist proposals are gaining traction ... we must use the full strength of our membership to respond forcefully.** ”

of freedom of mobility and free choice in transportation expect Congress to pursue new, dangerous government regulations that restrict personal and freight mobility, layer new substantive and procedural planning hurdles in front of highway project approvals, increase the pain of congestion as a tool to modify driver behavior, and reduce the share of federal highway user fees that can be spent on highway projects.

These extremist proposals are gaining traction in Congress and we must use the full strength of our membership and their connections to respond forcefully. The Highway Users is working with excellent legislators, reporters and media commentators to expose these proposals as elitist, incompatible with freedom and American tradition, at odds with desired environmental goals, and a dangerous course of government interference into our lives.

In keeping with these principles, we have no choice but to oppose the Federal Surface Transportation Policy and Planning Act of 2009, sponsored by Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Jay Rockefeller (D-WV) and Surface Transportation Subcommittee Chairman Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ). While the bill establishes many laudable goals, it is poisoned by provisions that attack highway use through mandatory reductions in travel and by forcing shippers to “choose” to move freight by rail. We urge Highway Users members to oppose this bill and other similar measures.



continued on page 3

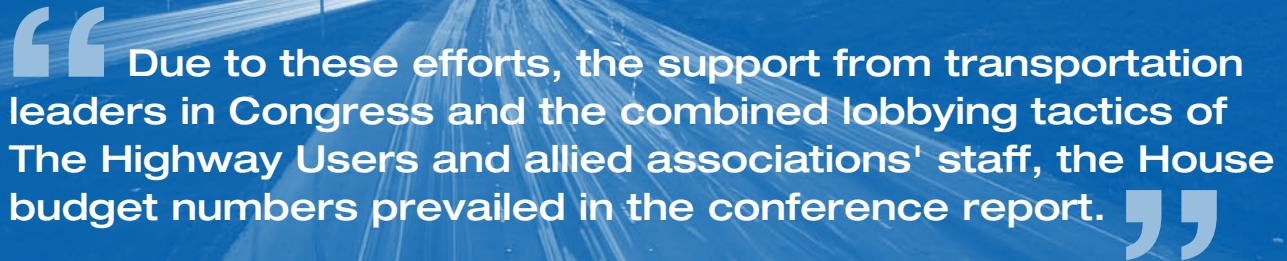
Legislative Victory – Federal Budget Adopted with Increased Highway Funding for FY10

In April, House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chairman Jim Oberstar (D-MN) and Highways & Transit Subcommittee Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR) met with The Highway Users staff to urge us to take action to promote the House's position on the budget. The House resolution included \$85 billion in more surface transportation funding than the Senate between fiscal year 2010 and 2015. The Highway Users responded by issuing a *Legislative Alert* calling on thousands of our supporters to press their legislators to advance the higher

tion bill is authorized. Congress is not bound by the President's budget proposal, but it is expected to make an impact on appropriators' funding decisions. ■

House Ways & Means Committee Chairman Rumored to Be Cool to Chairman Oberstar's Fuel Tax Proposal

Reports from Capitol Hill indicate that the House Ways & Means Committee members have reacted coolly to Rep. Oberstar's proposal to raise the fuel tax as part of the next highway bill. This development threatens to slow an already difficult road to the highway bill's authoriza-



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House funding levels. Due to these efforts, the support from transportation leaders in Congress and the combined lobbying tactics of The Highway Users and allied associations' staff, the House budget numbers prevailed in the conference report. Both the House and Senate approved the resolution on April 29th. We thank the many grassroots supporters who reached out to their Congressmen on this critical funding issue. ■

Highway Users “Encouraged” by President Obama’s Final Budget Proposal

In a press release, The Highway Users reacted to the final FY10 budget proposal released by the White House. The budget recognizes the Highway Trust Fund’s (HTF) dire straits and suggests that an appropriation of \$36 billion in general funds and \$5 billion in trust funds could prevent the HTF from collapsing prior to a new highway authorization bill. While the proposal does not recommend major funding increases or new sources of revenue, we are encouraged by repeated statements that funding levels will be increased once the new surface transporta-

tion. To force the issue, Rep. Oberstar announced in early June that he would not support temporary extensions of the current program. ■

Gearing Up for the Upcoming Authorization Battle

We attended the first highway authorization hearing of the Senate Commerce Committee’s Surface Transportation Subcommittee on April 28th. This committee has jurisdiction over highway and truck safety, freight and passenger rail policy. Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood testified during the hearing as the lead witness. He focused on multimodal needs and DOT’s preference to create strong alternatives to driving. LaHood also discussed passenger rail in detail, public transit, transit oriented development, mixed use development, and livable communities. In his testimony about economic growth, LaHood discussed shifting from goods production to services production. This testimony continues to raise concerns that the Department could pursue authorization policies that have an anti-highway bias. However, it is important to note that the Senate Commerce Committee does not have jurisdiction over

highway programs. We look forward to learning more about the Department's highway policies and expect that the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee will also ask Secretary LaHood to testify on highway issues under their jurisdiction. For a copy of Secretary LaHood's testimony, please contact us at info@highways.org. ■

Sounding the Call for Increased Energy Supplies

The Highway Users participated in the Consumer Energy Alliance's (CEA) Energy Day Forum on May 13th at the U.S. Capitol Visitors Center. Highway Users President & CEO Greg Cohen is on CEA's Board of Advisors. We also participated in a planning meeting for the event to develop strategy for the forum and helped outline how unstable and tight energy supplies harm transportation users and increase road construction costs. For more information about CEA, log onto www.consumereenergyalliance.org. ■

Weighing In on a New Interstate Construction Bill

In late April, we met with Congressman Henry Brown's (R-SC) staff to discuss a new Interstate construction bill (Interstate 2.0). Rep. Brown wants to introduce this new legislation and is developing bipartisan support among his fellow House T&I members. President Greg Cohen has been consulting with Rep. Brown's staff on refining the legislation's contents. We will keep Highway Users members apprised of the bill's progress. ■

The Highway Users Fights Anti-Mobility Agenda

cont. from page 1

Traditionally, when faced with concerns from The Highway Users, the Congress and Executive Branch have adopted practical, bipartisan, and consensus-building approaches to surface transportation bills, and have tended to reject extreme agendas. We hope to be able to work with this Congress and the Obama Administration to move a good surface transportation bill forward as soon as possible. ■



Members Welcomed

The Highway Users extends a warm welcome and sincere thanks to two new members since the first quarter issue of *Driving Ahead*. The **National Asphalt Pavement Association** has joined The Highway Users as a Supporting Member and **United Road Towing Arizona** has been added to our affiliate ranks as a member of the Arizona Highway Users Conference. Highway Users membership organizations total 288 and represent millions of individuals.

In addition, due to changes in personnel at member organizations, we have updated new contacts with orientation kits. Welcome to all. Complimentary subscriptions to Highway Users' publications and other mailings are available to virtually unlimited key contacts at member organizations. If you wish to add additional contacts to The Highway Users mailing lists, contact Cheryl Hollins at cherylhollins@highways.org. ■

Membership Renewals Steady

Despite the turbulent economic times affecting most businesses and trade associations, The Highway Users is experiencing steady membership dues payments. Final notices for 2009 were sent in May. Less than 1% of members to date have reported that the economy has restricted their budgets so severely that their membership in The Highway Users has been affected.

If your 2009 membership dues have not been paid, please contact the Membership Department about payment terms that will ease any budgetary challenges. ■

Recruitment Efforts in the Works

We are working with a Nevada Highway Users Coalition that has committed to state conference membership in The Highway Users for its members. The State Highway Users Conferences

continued on page 4

Discussing Legislative Priorities

Highway Users President & CEO Greg Cohen gave a talk at the American Dream Coalition's (ADC) annual meeting. The ADC supports affordable housing and mobility. The group is concerned that overzealous federal, state, and local land-use and planning regulations present obstacles to achieving the American Dream. At the meeting, Cohen outlined The Highway Users' latest Hill activities, authorization priorities, and other legislative goals. Highway Users' Board Member Kemper Freeman of Bellevue Square Managers hosted the meeting in Bellevue, WA. ■



Advancing Safer Roads



Highway Users and Roadway Safety Foundation staff Greg Cohen and Cathy Gillen attended the National Association of County Engineers (NACE) Annual Conference in Peoria, IL. Cohen addressed the attendees and highlighted The Highway Users' safety priorities, including direct financial assistance to counties to meet federal roadway safety mandates. For a copy of the presentation, contact us at info@highways.org. ■

SAFER ROADS:
Building Safety into Your Drive

INSIDE HIGHWAY USERS *continued from page 3*

are particularly important as the Highway Trust Fund authorization takes shape. Our grassroots capabilities are critical for our advocacy efforts.

Meanwhile, mailings and follow-up are underway to new groups of prospective members. Also, new membership literature is under development for use at trade shows, speaking engagements, and conferences. Highway Users President & CEO Greg Cohen has been invited to make presentations at a number of events to get the message out about public policy issues and expand our outreach. If you wish to help us expand our membership, please contact Cathy Gillen at cathygillen@highways.org. ■

What's Ahead

Highway Users Board Meeting

Thursday, June 25th

Hill & Knowlton
607 14th Street NW, Suite 300
Washington, DC 20005.

The meeting will be chaired by Governor Bill Graves and hosted by Secretary Norm Mineta.

8:30 am — Breakfast
9:00 - 11:30 am — Board meeting
12:00 noon – 2:00 pm — Lunch
at Bobby Van's restaurant

To RSVP, please contact us at
202.857.1200.

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Please save the date!



The American Highway Users Alliance is the broadest-based transportation coalition in Washington, DC, focused exclusively on promoting highway system performance, roadway safety improvements and freedom of mobility. The Highway Users was founded in 1932 as a not-for-profit organization.