



December 28, 2010

To Members of the House Leadership:

We are writing on behalf of multiple transportation organizations to raise our **strong objection** to one of the provisions in the draft of the House rules package for the 112th Congress that was released by House Republicans last week. The provision, which is on pages 10 and 11 of the draft, would hurt investment in transportation infrastructure, reduce jobs, and break faith with the American taxpayer.

The current House rule (Rule XXI, clause 3) ensures that all of the revenues that taxpayers pay into the Highway Trust Fund are used for highway and transit improvements on an annual basis. Prior to the adoption of this rule in 1998, it was common for Congress to engage in a shell game by reducing Highway Trust Fund spending so that spending elsewhere could be increased. As a result of these abuses, the balances in the trust fund soared, while much-needed infrastructure investment was deferred.

Transportation projects are frequently multi-year endeavors and are the product of a transportation planning process that must look years into the future. As such, federal highway and transit investments must be stable and predictable to allow states to maximize efficiency and public benefit in delivering transportation improvements. The [House Republican-proposed rules package](#) for the 112th Congress, unfortunately, would sever the user-financed basis of the Highway Trust Fund, and make annual federal highway and transit investments subject to the whims of the appropriations process. In so doing, this proposal would inject further uncertainty into an already destabilized U.S. transportation construction marketplace.

The combination of not having a multi-year reauthorization of the federal highway and public transportation programs – 15 months after the expiration of SAFETEA-LU – and recession-driven state budget challenges has led many states to begin scaling back their transportation programs. The U.S. construction industry is suffering unemployment levels in excess of 18 percent – more than twice the national average. Given these realities, the focus of the 112th Congress should be on enactment of a robust, multi-year reauthorization of the federal surface transportation program that creates jobs and boosts the economy, not on procedural maneuvers that will make it easier to cut highway investment.

We urge that this change to the House Rules be reconsidered.

American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
American Concrete Paving Association
American Council of Engineering Companies
American Highway Users Alliance
American Moving and Storage Association
American Public Transportation Association
American Road and Transportation Builders Association
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Traffic Safety Services Association
American Trucking Associations
Associated Equipment Distributors
Associated General Contractors of America
Association of Equipment Manufacturers
Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute
International Union of Operating Engineers
Laborer-Employers Cooperation and Education Trust
Laborers International Union of North America
National Asphalt Pavement Association
National Ready Mix Concrete Association
National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Text of the House Rules Package:

http://rules-republicans.house.gov/Media/PDF/112-Hres5-CP_xml.pdf

Section by Section Analysis: <http://rules-republicans.house.gov/Media/PDF/HRes%205%20Sec-by-Sec.pdf>