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Senate votes 74-22 to pass transportation reauthorization; focus moves to House



By Michael Lindenberg/Reporter
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In a rare bipartisan spirit, the Senate today voted 74-22 to approve the transportation reauthorization bill that has occupied much of the Capitol's attention for the past two months.

Every several years, Congress must pass a large bill that governs how the government will spend tens of billions of dollars each year on trains, subways, buses, bridges and -- especially -- highways. These bills have typically set the rules for everything from grants like the ones that helped DART build its light rail system to highway beautification funds to toll roads on federal roads. They usually put those rules in place for about five years.

States then use those rules to plan how they will spend their own gas tax dollars and other transportation funds accordingly.

The just-passed Senate's version of the bill would lay out how highways, bridges, buses and trains and related infrastructure are paid for over the next two years. It calls for \$109 billion in spending.

The House has grappled with a five-year plan that its supporters say would give states more reliability, and prevent another all-in scrum over transportation spending in just two years.

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Transportation writer Michael Lindenberg, reporter Theodore Kim and editorial writer Rodger Jones cover the subject from tollways to traffic, roads to rail. They invite tips and feedback from decision-makers and commuters alike.



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