



GOP unveils \$51.6B DOT, HUD budget

By Keith Laing - 06/06/12 11:21 AM ET

As lawmakers debate a new road and public transit spending bill, Republican leaders in the House unveiled on Wednesday a \$51.6 billion budget for the departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development.

The House Appropriations Committee said Wednesday that it will consider its Transportation, Housing and Urban Development budget for fiscal year 2013 in a subcommittee hearing Thursday. The draft of the proposal released Wednesday contains a \$3.9 billion reduction for the agencies from 2012 spending and it is \$1.9 billion less than President Obama requested for the departments earlier this year.

Appropriations Committee Chairman Hal Rogers (R-Ala.) said his committee had to make "smart investments" in transportation and housing development.

"This bill targets taxpayer dollars where they can be best used to improve the reliability, safety, and efficiency of our transportation systems, while also holding the line on spending to help reduce the nation's growing deficits," Rogers said.

Rodgers also said the 2013 transportation and HUD appropriations bill "funds important housing programs at responsible levels for Americans that need them, while scrubbing the HUD budget to find and eliminate excess, wasteful, or unnecessary spending."

Appropriations subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Chairman Tom Latham (R-Iowa) added that the legislation will "meet our nation's transportation and housing needs

while remaining fiscally responsible and accountable to hardworking American taxpayers.

"This legislation continues my goal and dedicated work of ending the budgeting gimmicks and accounting tricks that have plagued Washington in recent years," he said.

However, Democrats on the appropriations committee assailed the measure for cutting the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development departments' budgets.

"As we are witnessing in Europe, austerity is not working and shouldn't be replicated here," the ranking Democrat on the panel, Rep. Norm Dicks (D-Wash.), said in a statement released by his office.

"Due to House Republican infighting over the surface transportation bill and their unwillingness to compromise in conference negotiations, our Republican majority has had to resort to place-holder language in this bill for several important transportation provisions, not least of which, the funding level for the federal highway program," Dicks continued. "The reckless partisan brinkmanship of House Republicans on this traditionally bipartisan infrastructure bill is appalling."

The transportation and HUD bill does not have a "sufficient allocation," Dicks added, but he allowed that he appreciated "that our majority has made an effort to protect several important transportation and low-income housing programs."

This post was updated with new information at 12:31 p.m.

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