

June 8, 2012

## Conferees Exchange Proposals but Still No Agreement on Transportation Bill from Conference Committee

Major transportation advocacy organizations, including the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, again this week called on Congress to move toward agreement on a new surface transportation authorization, calling last week's job numbers (see related story: [bit.ly/AJconstruction](http://bit.ly/AJconstruction)) another example for why a new bill is critically needed.

"While the overall unemployment numbers at 8.3 percent are chilling, the construction industry numbers are much worse at 14.2 percent and showing further job losses. We need not remind you that these are high paying American jobs," the letter said. "We are deeply concerned about reports that suggest that progress is not being made in conference negotiations that will lead to completion of work by June 30th. We urge that serious action be taken immediately and we are prepared to work with all parties to reach a successful outcome."

The full letter is available at [bit.ly/letteronjobs](http://bit.ly/letteronjobs).

State transportation departments have been operating on short-term extensions of the nation's last surface transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU, since September 30, 2009. The current extension, which stands as the ninth, is set to expire June 30.

The Senate in mid-March passed MAP-21, a two-year, \$109 billion surface transportation authorization bill. The House, meanwhile, in mid-April approved HR 4348, a 90-day extension of the current surface transportation authorization that included Keystone Pipeline provisions.

On Thursday, House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) said at a press conference that a six-month extension through the end of the year may be needed if no agreement is made by the conference committee by the time the current extension runs out.

House and Senate Transportation Conference Committee members reportedly continued to exchange proposals and counter proposals this week.

Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) said during a weekly news conference that she and Sen. Max Baucus (R-Mont.) delivered Tuesday evening a resolution of disagreements dealing with issues under the jurisdictions of Environment and Public Works, Banking, and Commerce committees. Boxer's offer, however, did not address Keystone XL or coal ash provisions, both of which House Republicans want included in a transportation bill. House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman John Mica (R-Fl.) on Thursday began to respond to Boxer's offer with the first portion of a multi-part counter-offer.

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