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Senate Anticipated to Act on Highway Trust Fund Measure Next Week

AASHTO Journal

The Senate this week did not take formal action on a House bill that would move nearly \$11 billion into the Highway Trust Fund. However, according to several news reports, the Senate will likely be voting on some version of a short-term Highway Trust Fund fix early next week, just before cash management strategies would be deployed by the U.S. Department of Transportation as the HTF balance drops below the preferred \$4 billion minimum.

The Senate will likely vote on [H.R. 5021](#), the House's short-term HTF fix and MAP-21 extension passed last week (see related AASHTO Journal story [here](#)). That measure provides about \$11 billion to carry the HTF through May 2015 and was passed by a vote of 367-55. However, an agreement crafted by Senate leadership will allow four amendments to the bill to be considered. An amendment by Senate Finance Committee Chair Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Ranking Member Orrin Hatch (R-UT) will be offered that would essentially strike the financing package in the House bill and insert the deal approved by the Senate Finance Committee earlier this month. The Senate Finance Committee deal relies on a slightly different mix of funding sources than the House bill but both total almost \$11 billion (see related AASHTO Journal story [here](#)). Sen. Tom Carper (D-DE) and Bob Corker (R-TN), along with Senate Environment and Public Works Chair Barbara Boxer (D-CA), have proposed an amendment to strike the House bill's May 2015 extension and authorize highway, transit, and highway safety programs only through the end of calendar year 2014, thus requiring lawmakers to address a long-term HTF solution and transportation bill or another program extension during a post-election "lame duck" session of Congress.

Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) has proposed a "devolution" amendment that would cut the current 18.4-cent-per-gallon federal gas tax down to 3.7 cents over the next five years while also giving states more power over transportation projects. And Sen. Pat Toomey (R-PA) will likely see a vote on his amendment to waive environmental reviews for road, bridge and transit repair projects in the wake of disasters.

The AASHTO Journal will update readers on any Senate action on a HTF resolution. Check back next week for additional details.

Questions regarding this article may be directed to editor@ashtojournal.org.

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