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Senate EPW Leaders Announce "Agreement in Principle" on Transportation Bill

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At a news conference Thursday, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works Chairman Barbara Boxer (D-CA) and Ranking Member David Vitter (R-LA), along with other committee leaders, announced that they have made major progress on a surface transportation bill to succeed MAP-21.

"I am so proud to be here as Chairman with the rest of the Big 4 from the Environment and Public Works Committee, which includes EPW Ranking Member David Vitter (R-LA), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Transportation and Infrastructure Tom Carper (D-DE) and Subcommittee Ranking Member John Barrasso (R-WY), to announce that we have reached agreement in principle on a transportation bill," Boxer said. "The reason the four of us are standing here is to send a strong signal to this country that we, as leaders of this committee, have worked across party lines to act before the Highway Trust Fund cannot pay its bills."

Those principles, according to a statement from Boxer, include:

- Passing a long-term measure, not a short-term fix;
- Keeping formulas for current core programs;
- Exhibiting fiscal responsibility by keeping with current funding levels (plus inflation);
- Focusing on policies that expand transportation opportunities for rural areas;
- Continuing efforts to leverage local resources in order to speed up transportation construction, create jobs, and support economic growth; and
- Requiring "better information sharing" regarding federal grants.

"It's about time to put trust into the Highway Trust Fund, and as we move forward, we will stay focused on a long-term reauthorization bill that invests in rural areas, and expanding flexibility for state and local governments," Vitter said.

Vitter said the committee has a detailed outline completed at this time, while staff is currently drafting the full bill. He also said that he expects to be acting on that bill right after the next recess and that they are already working with Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation in order to have this tackled well before MAP-21 expires.

A video of the news conference is available [here](#).