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Congress nears deadline on federal highway fund

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As the deadline approaches for Congress to extend funding for the federal Highway Trust Fund, President Barack Obama this week plans to pressure lawmakers to find a way to replenish the fund, [CNN reported](#).

The money in the trust fund is used for road and bridge projects, and the U.S. Department of Transportation has said federal funding for construction projects will start to dwindle at the beginning of August if lawmakers don't give the fund more money.

Last week, committees both the House of Representatives and the Senate passed similar measures that would supply nearly \$11 billion for transportation projects, enough to last until next summer. The bills are expected to pass the full House and Senate, but the two sides must then work quickly on compromises between the two bills.

Obama has laid out a \$302 billion transportation funding plan that would close some tax loopholes to fund infrastructure projects.

Meanwhile, U.S. governors are hoping national lawmakers approve a short-term fix before the federal highway account becomes insolvent, according to [this story](#) in Bloomberg.

They also want a long-term solution that would remove funding uncertainty for road and bridge projects.

Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) officials told the Business Record in an interview last week that declines in federal funding will affect which projects make it into their long-range plan updates, set to be unveiled later this year.

According to MPO summaries done earlier this year, 100 of the 409 [bridges](#) in the MPO's jurisdiction are classified as structurally deficient or functionally obsolete, and 19 percent of [roads](#) in the area are currently rated as being in "poor" condition.

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