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Rail News: Federal Legislation & Regulation

## House Appropriations Committee unveils FY2015 transportation funding bill

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The House Appropriations Committee earlier this week released the fiscal-year 2015 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development funding bill.

The legislation includes funding for the departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies.

In total, the bill reflects an allocation of \$52 billion in discretionary spending – an increase of \$1.2 billion above the FY2014 enacted level but a decrease of \$7.8 billion versus President Barack Obama’s budget request, according to a press release issued by Rep. Hal Rogers (R-Ky.), who chairs the committee.

However, given the reduction in offsets caused by a decline in Federal Housing Administration receipts, the program level within the bill is more accurately \$1.8 billion below the current level, he said.

"This bill makes responsible choices to trim programs while targeting taxpayer dollars where they are needed most – critical transportation and housing programs that our communities, our economy, and our people rely on," Rogers said.

The bill includes \$17.1 billion in discretionary appropriations for the U.S. Department of Transportation for FY2015, which is \$727.3 million below the FY2014 enacted level and \$5.8 billion below Obama’s request. Funding is prioritized for programs and activities with national need or significance, Rogers said.

The bill would fund the Federal Railroad Administration at \$1.4 billion, which would be \$193 million less than the FY2014 enacted level. The funding includes \$340 million for Amtrak to continue service for all current routes and \$850 million for capital grants. The bill would require overtime limits on Amtrak employees and prohibit federal funding for Amtrak routes that offer a discount of 50 percent or more off normal, peak fares. No funding is included for high-speed rail.

The bill also would provide \$10.5 billion for the Federal Transit Administration, \$253 million less than the FY2014 enacted level. Transit formula grants would be funded at \$8.6 billion, consistent with FY2014, the final year of the federal MAP-21 law. The legislation would provide \$1.7 billion for Capital Investment Grants, known as New Starts; full funding for all current Full Funding Grant Agreement transit projects; and full funding for all state and local Small Starts projects that would begin in 2015.