



Boxer: House transportation plan 'unworkable'



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The chairwoman of the Senate committee that is pushing for a new \$265 billion transportation bill called the House's proposal to use cuts at the United States Postal Service to help pay for the measure "unworkable."

Republican leaders in the House said last Friday that they were planning to use revenue from **rolling back** Saturday postal deliveries to pay for a short-term transportation bill.

The GOP leaders argued that linking the postal cuts and transportation funding would prevent a bankruptcy in infrastructure spending that has been projected to occur in August without congressional action.

Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), who is the chairwoman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, said the GOP's transportation plan was "strange," however.

"Late Friday, Republican leaders of the House came out with a strange plan to 'rescue' the Highway Trust Fund for a few months," Boxer said in a statement. "Instead of working with Democrats to come up with a sensible user fee which has been the foundation of the Highway Trust Fund, House Republican Leadership proposes cutting back mail deliveries to American households. This idea is a jobs killer which does not even fund the Highway Trust Fund for a long enough period of time to provide the certainty that states, cities, and businesses need."

GOP leaders said their plan to link postal cuts to transportation spending bill could provide about \$14 billion to \$15 billion, which they said would provide a year's worth of reinforcement for the Department of Transportation's highway trust fund.

The traditional source of revenue for the Highway Trust Fund is the federal gas tax, which is currently priced at 18.4 cents per gallon. The gas tax has not been increased since 1993 and it currently only brings about \$34 billion per year, however.

The Senate is pushing for a six-year transportation bill that would maintain the current level of annual funding, which is approximately \$50 billion per year.

The upper chamber has not yet identified how it would pay for the transportation spending beyond the \$204 billion that is expected to be brought in by the gas tax between now and 2020.

Boxer said she was not impressed with the House GOP's plan to take money from the USPS, however.

"This plan is a classic example of House Republicans not planning for a shortfall we have known about for years," Boxer said. "It is 'the dog ate my homework excuse.' It is unworkable, makes no sense, and ignores the huge infrastructure needs we face, as so many bridges and roads are in grave disrepair. If the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee can do its job and pass a bill unanimously, then surely the House can begin to do the work needed to solve this problem -- and not kick the can down the road with a totally unrelated and unworkable idea."

The Congressional Budget Office has projected that lawmakers will have to find an extra \$100 billion in addition to the gas tax money to approve a six-year transportation bill.

TAGS: Barbara Boxer, GOP Postal-for-Transportation plan, Postal Service, Department of Transportation, Highway Trust Fund shortfall, Gas Tax, MAP-21 Reauthorization