



## Boehner suggests 'nine to 12 month' highway bill



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Greg Nash

House Speaker John Boehner (R-Ohio) said this week that his chamber would likely only approve a highway bill that lasts for "some number of months."

"I think the idea is to try to find a package that would plug this hole for nine to 12 months to make sure that the highway projects that are underway will continue," Boehner said in a news conference.

Lawmakers have been struggling to find a way to close a **shortfall** in transportation funding that is estimated to be as high as \$16 billion per year.

The traditional source for transportation funding is revenue that is collected by the federal gas tax, which is currently 18.4 cents per gallon. The tax only brings in about \$34 billion per year, however, and the current level of transportation spending infrastructure advocates want lawmakers to maintain is about \$50 billion annually.

Transportation advocates have pushed for an **increase** in the gas tax for the first time since 1993, but Boehner said his chamber was looking for a shorter funding solution.

"I know that the Ways and Means Committee is...having discussions about a package of pay-fors that would fill the gap for some number of months," he said.

Republicans leaders have proposed using revenue from **cut backs** at the U.S. Postal Service to pay for at least one year of transportation funding.

Advocates for both transportation and postal workers have objected to the idea of combining the two funding issues.

Democrats in the Senate have dismissed the GOP's postal plan as "**unworkable**."

Transportation advocates have pushed for a longer funding bill that last at least six years. However, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) has projected that lawmakers will have to find an extra \$100 billion in addition to the gas tax revenue to pay for a six-year transportation bill.

President Obama has recommended that lawmakers use approximately \$150 billion from closing corporate tax loopholes to help pay for the new infrastructure spending. Obama has proposed a four-year, \$302 billion transportation bill that he says would increase the annual road and transit funding by about \$25 billion per year.

The corporate tax reform proposal is considered unlikely to be approved and lawmakers in both chambers have begun exploring other funding options, however.

**TAGS: John Boehner, Highway Trust Fund, Gas Tax, Transportation Funding shortfall, MAP-21 Reauthorization**

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