



Metro

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U.S. Senate Approves Transit Security Bill

The Senate Banking Committee moved earlier today to approve a bill that, if adopted into law, would authorize \$3.5 billion in public transit security grants over the next three years. The bill approved today was crafted by the Banking Committee's Chair, Senator Richard Shelby of Alabama, and the Ranking Democrat, Senator Paul Sarbanes of Maryland. The funding permitted by this measure would be available for upgrades to communications and surveillance equipment and funding for security training and public awareness campaigns. An effort to pass a similar measure last year stalled after it was passed in the Senate shortly after the tragic London bus and rail bombings.

Congressional Leadership Takes Steps to Strip Alaska Earmarks

In response to withering criticism over excessive earmarking in the recently-enacted surface transportation reauthorization bill (SAFETEA-LU), the Republican leadership in the House and Senate have agreed to eliminate \$454 million worth of earmarks for two bridges in Alaska that were championed by Transportation Committee Chairman Don Young (R-AK) and Senator Ted Stevens (R-AK). Both bridges would have been built in sparsely populated areas of Alaska, thereby dubbing them "bridges to nowhere". The move comes amid repeated calls for fiscal constraint in the face of massive hurricane expenditures and growing budget deficits. A provision in the FY2006 Transportation Appropriations bill, which is expected to be finalized within the next day or two, will redirect the bridge earmarks to Alaska's highway formula allocations.

Los Angeles City Council Transportation Committee Meeting Agenda

The Los Angeles City Council Transportation Committee special meeting for this

Friday includes two Exposition Light Rail items. The committee will consider a report from the City Administrative Officer and the Chief Legislative Analyst recommending the preparation of a financial contribution agreement between the City and Metro that will allow payment of \$40 million over five years, inclusive of \$5 million in mitigation for Grand Avenue in front of Los Angeles Trade Tech College, to meet the City's proportional share of funding necessary to complete Phase I of the Mid-City/Exposition Light Rail Transit Project. The committee will also consider a Department of Transportation (LADOT) report submitting their comments on the Exposition Light Rail Final EIR.

Required Seat Belt Usage By Metro Bus Operators Ruled Valid

The Los Angeles Times is planning to run a story tomorrow on the latest ruling by an outside arbitrator in a case involving Metro and the UTU over the use of seat belts by Metro Bus operators. The case went to arbitration when the Union objected to Metro issuing an order earlier this year requiring all of its bus operators to wear seat belts. The arbitrator ruled this week that Metro did not violate the Collective Bargaining Agreement with the UTU when it unilaterally issued an order requiring bus operators to wear seat belts. On the issue of whether or not a violation of the seat belt rule is a major infraction, the arbitrator remanded this issue back to Metro and the Union for negotiations. The Arbitrator indicated in his ruling that if the parties could not reach an agreement on disciplinary actions, then he would decide the issue.

Go Metro To Hollywood Christmas Parade

Media Relations issued a news release this afternoon encouraging people to use the Metro System if they are planning to go to this year's Hollywood Christmas Parade on Sunday, Nov. 27. Mayor Villaraigosa is this year's Grand Marshal of the parade.

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