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| **U.S. House Appropriations Committee Adopts Fiscal Year 2013 Transportation Spending Bill**  Moments ago, the U.S. House of Representatives' Appropriations Committee adopted the Fiscal Year 2013 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD) spending bill on a voice vote. The bill provides a total of approximately $51 billion in discretionary spending for the Transportation and Housing and Urban Development Departments. The level of funding provided in the bill is nearly $4 billion less than Fiscal Year 2012 and $1.9 billion less than the Obama Administration’s request. The bill adopted by the Committee provides no money for the TIGER discretionary grant program (the U.S. Senate provided $500 million for this grant program) and only appropriates $1.817 billion for New Starts projects (the Senate allocated $2.044 billion – with funding for our two New Starts projects). The Fiscal Year 2013 Budget released by President Obama in February of this year included $2.265 billion for New Starts projects and included funding for Metro's two projects, the Downtown Regional Connector ($31 million) and the Westside Subway Extension ($50 million). The reduced funding for the New Starts program in the draft House transportation appropriations bill means that our Government Relations team and federal advocates will be working with House and Senate offices to ensure that the final transportation appropriations bill adopted by Congress and sent to the President later this year reflects the Board's priorities.  **Congressional Leaders to Discuss Surface Transportation Re-Authorization**  U.S. House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner (R-OH) and U.S. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) will meet later today to discuss negotiations on the Surface Transportation Re-Authorization Conference Committee. They will be joined by Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA), the Chairman of the Conference, and Representative John Mica (R-FL), the Conference Vice Chairman. The current extension of SAFETEA-LU expires on June 30th, and talks of another extension have increased as the Conferees get closer to the deadline. Metro's Federal Relations Team is closely watching the negotiations.  **President Obama Releases Executive Order to Streamline Infrastructure Projects**  Late last week, President Obama released Executive Order 13604, "Improving Performance of Federal Permitting and Review of Infrastructure Projects". Executive Order 13604 has two goals; "more efficient and effective review of proposed large-scale and complex infrastructure projects, resulting in better projects, improved outcomes for communities, and faster permit decision-making and review timelines," and "transparency, predictability, accountability, and continuous improvement of routine infrastructure permitting and review". Metro's federal relations team has been working with the Administration and has been suggesting ideas that would help Board approved items into Executive Order 13604. Recommendations included streamlining the process to acquire Full Funding Grant Agreements after a Record of Decision has been issued. Four specific projects brought to the attention of the Administration were the Westside Subway Extension, Downtown Regional Connector, and the Crenshaw/LAX Transit Corridor. Please click [here](http://permits.performance.gov/sites/default/files/Federal_Infrastructure_Plan.pdf) to view Executive Order 13604.  <http://permits.performance.gov/sites/default/files/Federal_Infrastructure_Plan.pdf> |
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