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| **House Consideration of Fiscal Year 2014 Transportation Spending Bill Stalls – Continuing Resolution Likely in the Fall**  Today, the U.S. House of Representatives halted its consideration of H.R. 2610, the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations bill for Fiscal Year 2014. The bill was taken up yesterday by the House, but this afternoon the measure was pulled by House GOP leaders who asserted that more time was needed to consider the measure. In an unusual departure from his leadership, the Republican Chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations Harold Rogers (R-KY) criticized the decision to pull the bill from the floor; “With this action, the House has declined to proceed on the implementation of the very budget it adopted just three months ago.” A number of media reports have asserted that the bill was withdrawn from consideration because the House leadership did not have enough votes (218) needed to pass the measure, largely because conservatives within the House GOP wanted the bill to increase deeper cuts in transportation and housing programs. The current bill is already $10 billion less than the U.S. Senate’s transportation and housing appropriations bill.  White House officials had already indicated, before H.R. 2610 was pulled from the House floor, that if the President were presented with the legislation that they would recommend that he veto the measure. The White House criticism of the House transportation spending bill focused on, among other issues, its lack of funding for the Federal Transit Administration’s New Starts program. Specifically, the White House cited the fact that the House bill would “halt the pipeline for any new construction on larger New Starts or Core Capacity Projects.” Importantly, the New Starts funding recommended by President Obama in his Fiscal Year 2014 Budget and the U.S. Senate’s Transportation spending bill for Fiscal Year 2014, would fund our agency’s two New Starts projects (Purple Line Extension and Regional Connector). As currently drafted, the House transportation bill would offer no federal funding for these same projects. The White House has also criticized the House transportation bill for eliminating funding for the popular TIGER grant program and for prohibiting the use of federal funds for the California High Speed Rail project. Future consideration of the House transportation bill is unclear. The measure could be folded into a broader continuing resolution that may be considered by the House and Senate when they reconvene in September after their summer recess during the month of August. Our government relations staff will continue to closely monitor House consideration of H.R. 2610 and the U.S. Senate’s transportation spending bill for Fiscal Year 2014. |
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