



Metro

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California's U.S. Senators Introduce Bill to Permit Federal Funding for Subway Tunneling in Los Angeles

U.S. Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein jointly introduced legislation today that would, if adopted into law, repeal a standing restriction on federal funding for subway tunneling in the Wilshire Corridor. The bill is similar to legislation (H.R. 238) introduced by Congressman Henry Waxman on January 4, 2007. Adoption of the [Boxer/Feinstein](#) and [Waxman](#) bills into law would effectively achieve Metro's Board-adopted goal of removing the current restriction on the use of federal funds for tunneling in the Wilshire Corridor. The Board adopted a "support" position on H.R. 238 on January 25, 2007.

House Panel Examines Federal Transit and Rail Security Initiatives

The U.S House of Representatives' Homeland Security Committee convened a hearing this morning in Washington to review the status of the federal government's efforts pertaining to rail and transit security. Witnesses from the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Government Accountability Office (GAO) outlined the Administration's overall transit and rail security strategy. TSA Administrator Kip Hawley noted the recent hiring of Paul Lennon, Metro's former Director of Intelligence and Emergency Preparedness Management, as TSA's new General Manager for Mass Transit Security.

During the hearing, Democratic committee members criticized the

Administration's three year delay in finalizing a comprehensive risk assessment for securing the entire transportation sector, as required by the National Infrastructure Protection Plan. Additionally, several members alluded to the importance of training front-line transit and rail employees and pressed TSA to take steps to make such training mandatory instead of allowing it to be voluntary in nature. Finally, the issue of stakeholder outreach and insufficient utilization of industry best practices by TSA was raised as an area of concern.

Simultaneous with the hearing, the GAO released a report today entitled ["Passenger Rail Security: Federal Strategy and Enhanced Coordination Needed to Prioritize and Guide Security Efforts."](#) The report concluded that the absence of a sector-specific transportation security plan by TSA has significantly limited the agency's ability to develop an overall strategy to secure transit and passenger rail systems.

Committee Chairman Bennie Thompson (D-MS) indicated that a comprehensive transit and rail security authorization proposal will be brought before the committee in late February or early March.

FTA Unveils Annual Report on New Starts

As part of the Bush Administration's budget submission to Congress, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) released its [Annual Report on New Starts: Proposed Allocation of Funds for Fiscal Year 2008](#) earlier today.

The report, which is required by federal statute, constitutes the Administration's recommendations to Congress for New Starts funding in FY08. It provides detailed information on New Starts projects in different stages of development. For projects with existing Full Funding Grant Agreements (FFGA), including the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension, the report includes a project profile as well as a summary of its current construction status and anticipated ridership. For prospective projects seeking an FFGA that have received prior FTA approval to engage in preliminary engineering and final design, the report also includes detailed evaluations and ratings. California projects currently undergoing preliminary engineering activities include proposed light rail extensions in Sacramento and San Francisco.

In addition, the New Starts report includes, for the first time, a section on the "Small Starts" program, which was established in SAFETEA-LU as a separate program to fund capital projects costing less than \$250 million. The report highlights the Metro Rapid Bus System Gap Closure Project as one of only four proposed "Small Starts" projects nationwide to be recommended for funding in FY08. FTA has given our project a "medium" overall project rating and a "medium" rating on local financial commitment. The other three projects (in Missouri, Oregon and Washington) received identical project ratings.

Of Note

On this date in 1874, Judge Robert M. Widney incorporated the Spring and West 6th Street Railroad. This was the first rail transit system in Los Angeles.

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