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**\$8 Billion for Highway Trust Fund is cut From FAA Bill**

Today, a provision to provide \$8 billion to ensure the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) was stripped from legislation adopted by the House of Representatives. The bill, H.R. 6327, would extend the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) authorization for another three months. The final version of the bill was adopted unanimously (422-0).

According to Congressional Quarterly, the \$8 billion for the Highway Trust Fund was removed from the bill due to objections from Republicans serving on both the House Appropriations and Budget committees.

As originally introduced by Ways and Means Committee Chairman Charles Rangel (D-NY), the FAA reauthorization bill included an \$8 billion appropriation from the general fund of the Treasury to the HTF to stave off the pending insolvency of the HTF's Highway Account until some time in late Fiscal Year 2010. Southern California Congressman Jerry Lewis (R-CA) explained his objection to the \$8 billion appropriation by sharing that, "This bill just exacerbates our transportation funding problem by using an \$8 billion taxpayer-funded band-aid on the terminally ill Highway Trust Fund. We need real reform and practical solutions, not more buck passing."

**Transportation, Air Quality & Elected Officials unite to Urge Legislature and Governor to Enact Cargo Container Fee Law**

Earlier today, Media Relations staff attended the Cargo Container Fee press event in San Gabriel. Attendees included local elected officials and stakeholders representing the San Gabriel region who are urging the state Legislature and

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Governor to enact the Cargo Container Fee bill, SB 974 (Lowenthal-Long Beach).

Speakers at the press conference highlighted that if the bill is approved, it would raise approximately \$400 million a year through port cargo container fees, with revenues evenly split between air quality improvements and congestion relief projects. The \$30 per-container fee would offset the traffic congestion and air pollution costs of goods movement and fairly place the cost of accommodating trade on those who directly benefit from it.

If it passes the Assembly, the legislation will be sent to Governor Schwarzenegger for his consideration. Numerous print and television media covered the press conference. Stories are expected to run this week.

### **Media Inquiry into Half-Cent Sales Tax Survey**

This morning, Media Relations distributed a news release announcing the release of the results of a study showing that, if an election were held today, 73 percent of Los Angeles County residents surveyed would support a proposed half-cent sales tax on the November 2008 ballot to fund transportation infrastructure improvements. Release of the results comes two days prior to the Board's June 26<sup>th</sup> meeting where members will discuss the initiative.

The release also notes that the poll was conducted from June 5, 2008 to June 15, 2008 with 1,400 likely voters surveyed by Fairbank, Maslin, Maulin & Associates (FMM&A). Respondents were asked about projects spread across the entire County ranging from the extension of light rail systems and connectivity to the airports to local neighborhood projects such as repairing potholes and synchronizing traffic signals. The FMM&A study confirms a recently conducted third-party survey by MoveLA, a coalition bringing together key constituencies to explore alternative transportation funding and implementation strategies. Both surveys found support for the initiative exceeds the two-thirds margin needed to pass the measure.

The survey was conducted after the Board's April meeting where members asked staff to examine the initiative's viability and report back with the results. If the measure is placed on the November 2008 ballot and musters the necessary two-thirds voter approval, the new tax would generate approximately \$40 billion over 30 years and would finance dozens of street and highway improvements and new public transit projects in Los Angeles County. Media Relations received calls from the Los Angeles Times, San Gabriel Valley Tribune and KFI radio. Stories may appear tomorrow.

### **Media Inquiry into Metro Bus On-Time Performance**

The Los Angeles Times has inquired about the on-time performance of the Metro

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Bus system. At its upcoming meeting, the Board will consider whether to amend the FY 2009 Budget to add ten additional Transit Operations Supervisors to help the agency achieve its on-time performance goals. Our own survey on on-time performance has found that, at 62 percent, the agency has the lowest actual on-time performance when compared with nine other transit properties across the country for local bus service. Our goal is to reach 70 percent on-time service.

Our Chief Operations Officer, Carolyn Flowers reported that the agency's on-time performance has declined partly due to the fact that we have had fewer vehicle operations supervisors to monitor bus services than other transit agencies surveyed. The agency operates bus services in the most congested region in the country, and its bus services constitute the majority of transit service available compared with other transit properties that operate more rail service. Frequent street closures for special events -- especially in downtown Los Angeles and Hollywood -- requiring buses to be detoured are also an ongoing challenge affecting our on-time performance.

We are working with the Board to increase staffing needed to more closely track vehicle operations supervision, which could add two new supervisors per sector. The additional supervisors will help, but this problem will not be fully addressed by the Board action on Thursday. We are working to improve on-time performance over time and it will require additional steps such as bus lanes and more rapid service. The story is expected to run tomorrow.

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