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[Pressroom \(web\)](#)

[Ask the CEO](#)

[CEO Forum](#)

[Employee Recognition](#)

[Employee Activities](#)

[Metro Projects](#)

[Facts at a Glance \(web\)](#)

[Archives](#)

[Events Calendar](#)

[Research Center/Library](#)

[Metro Classifieds](#)

[Bazaar](#)

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[30/10 Initiative](#)

[Policies](#)

[Training](#)

[Help Desk](#)

[Intranet Policy](#)

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## Senate Approves Bill Clearing Way for Possible Subway Extension

- Senate, House reconciliation needed before bill goes to the President

(Sept. 12, 2007) The U.S. Senate approved a bill, Wednesday, that would allow subway tunneling in parts of Los Angeles, possibly clearing the way for an extension of the subway to Santa Monica.

California Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer sponsored the provision in the Fiscal Year 2008 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development bill. Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has called for a "subway to the sea."

"Today's vote by the Senate brings us one step closer to bringing the long-awaited expansion of the Metro Red Line closer to reality," Feinstein said. "It's time to give the commuters of Los Angeles relief from the severe gridlock they face every day."

Boxer said, "This subway project is so important to helping reduce the terrible congestion in Los Angeles. We've been told this project can be done safely, so it's time to move forward."

"Clearly, we look forward to being able to secure federal funds for transit projects that would bring more mobility to Los Angeles County," said Metro Board Chair Pam O'Connor. "Metro greatly appreciates the excellent work of Senators Feinstein and Boxer, both of whom championed the provision in the bill that would lift the longstanding ban on federal funding for tunneling projects in parts of Los Angeles."

The spending bill includes a provision to overturn a 1985 law that prohibited tunneling because of the potential for methane gas explosions.

After the Los Angeles City Council passed a motion in support of reversing the laws banning tunneling in 2004 and the Metro Board voted to begin discussions of subway expansion in 2005, an independent scientific safety review determined that subway tunneling could move forward safely.

The Feinstein-Boxer provision was added to the spending bill during consideration by the Senate Appropriations Committee in July. Before the bill can be sent to the President for his signature, it must be reconciled with the House in conference, and approved by an up-or-down vote by both chambers.