



**Metro**

# Daily Brief

Thursday, February 7, 2008  
20080207-0

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## House Panel Questions Transportation Secretary on FY 2009 Budget

Earlier today, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies convened a hearing to examine the President's FY 2009 budget proposal as it relates to transportation programs. Secretary of Transportation Mary Peters testified before the subcommittee and defended the Administration's proposed \$68.2 billion budget for aviation, highway, highway safety, transit and intercity passenger rail programs. Several members, including subcommittee chairman John Olver (D-MA), took strong exception to the Administration's dramatic cuts for Amtrak and also questioned the Administration's decision to generally under-fund surface transportation programs below levels authorized in SAFETEA-LU.

On the issue of congestion pricing, Representative Joe Knollenberg (R-MI) expressed concern over the implementation of tolling strategies in terms of the potential to create a two class system. In addition, Representative Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA), whose views on tolling in general and on our congestion reduction proposal in particular are well known, inquired about the impact on low income drivers if HOV (High Occupancy Vehicle) lanes are converted to HOT (High Occupancy Toll) lanes. Secretary Peters indicated that Los Angeles County's congestion reduction proposal is ambitious in nature and that the conversion of HOV lanes to HOT lanes would significantly improve the efficient use of transit along these corridors. In addition, she cited Mayor Villaraigosa's strong support of Los Angeles' proposed project.

In the weeks and months ahead, appropriations subcommittees in both chambers will continue to hold hearings on the President's proposed budget, with an eye towards marking up individual spending bills this spring and summer.

## FTA Takes Prompt Action to Correct Eastside Budget Request

As mentioned in yesterday's Daily Brief, senior officials at the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) have informed us that immediate steps will be taken to correct a clerical error in the President's FY 2009 budget that directly impacts the Metro Gold Line Eastside Extension. Earlier today, FTA Administrator James Simpson sent a letter to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees informing them that the budget request for Eastside should be set at

