



MTA LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

DATE: August 22, 1997

TO: MTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: GISSELLE ACEVEDO-FRANCO

According to sources, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee staff has drafted legislation to reauthorize the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). The draft legislation will be circulated to Committee Members in Washington next week. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bud Shuster (R-PA) plans to consider the legislation in the Surface Transportation Subcommittee on September 10th and 11th, and in full committee on September 17th and 18th.

While details of the draft legislation are not yet available, sources indicate that the reauthorization will be for three years, and will follow the recently passed FY 1998 Budget Resolution by authorizing approximately \$30.3 billion in transportation spending in the first year (\$24.9 billion for highways, \$5.4 billion for transit). Authorization amounts are likely to increase in the second and third years of the legislation as the Committee seeks to spend a greater portion of the highway and transit trust funds (By way of comparison, the original ISTEA legislation authorized approximately \$22.1 billion for highway and \$4.3 billion for transit programs in FY 1997). Once authorized, transportation spending is appropriated yearly through transportation appropriations legislation.

This February, MTA submitted its Board-approved \$723 million ISTEA reauthorization request to Congress. The MTA request included \$250 million for replacement of clean-fueled buses; \$271 million for highway projects (I-10 HOV Lane/El Monte Busway Extension, San Gabriel Valley Highway-Rail Grade, and Santa Monica Blvd. Transit Parkway); and \$202 million for rail (MOS-3 Mid City, MOS-4 San Fernando Valley, and MOS-4 Eastern Extension).

On February 25, 1997, several Members of the Los Angeles Congressional delegation wrote Chairman Shuster in support of the MTA's request. On March 6, 1997, MTA Chairman Richard Riordan testified before the Surface Transportation Subcommittee to advocate the MTA's submittal. Over the past several months, MTA staff and federal lobbyists have met with Congressional Members and staff to urge support for the Board-

approved ISTEA request. On August 4, 1997, Chairman Shuster visited Los Angeles and was given a helicopter tour of the Los Angeles County transportation system.

Since a revised MTA budget revenue forecast will likely affect MTA's future work program, the Board may wish to revisit the contents of its ISTEA reauthorization request

MTA Government Relations staff will update you as soon as more details on the contents of the ISTEA reauthorization legislation are made known. If you have any questions, please contact Ron Stone at 213/922-2232.