

# Legislative Issue Briefing

March 13, 2010

## FISCAL YEAR 2011 BUDGET & APPROPRIATIONS

As Congress develops a new surface transportation authorization bill, it is critical that the annual budget and appropriations keep pace with public transportation needs and continue to make significant investments in intercity and high speed passenger rail. **APTA's recommendations for federal surface transportation law call for transit program funding of no less than \$14.9 billion in Fiscal Year 2011, and no less than \$50 billion for high speed and intercity passenger rail over a six year period.**

### Public Transportation Programs:

The Administration's proposal of \$10.8 billion for public transportation programs is far short of APTA's recommended level of no less than \$14.9 billion, and is inadequate to address critical needs to maintain our systems in a "state of good repair," meet increasingly important safety priorities, and expand mobility options to accommodate growing ridership demand. APTA's estimate of the total annual resources needed to maintain and improve our public transportation systems, from all sources, is \$59.2 billion.

Like most domestic programs, the Administration's request represents almost no growth for the base transit program from funding levels approved by Congress in FY 2010. In transmitting the budget request, the President acknowledged that growth in the public transportation program is restrained due to the lack of resources available in the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), and the absence of a long-term authorization bill. Recent projections released by the Congressional Budget Office indicate that, in the absence of new legislation to generate revenue for the MTA of the HTF, there will not be enough resources left to fund the transit program at current levels through the end of FY 2011.

### Positive Train Control (PTC):

The Administration once again did not recommend new funding for the "Railroad Safety Technology Program," which provides grants to help implement federally mandated positive train control systems. In Fiscal Year 2010, this program was funded at the authorized level - \$50 million under the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (RSIA). Commuter and intercity passenger railroads, as well as certain freight railroads, must have PTC systems implemented by the end of 2015. The estimated cost of implementing PTC on public commuter railroads alone is estimated to exceed \$2 billion.

### High-Speed Rail:

The Administration's Budget proposes \$1 billion for high-speed and intercity passenger rail, which should enable the Department of Transportation to move forward on critical corridor plans. While we applaud the Administration's continued commitment to High Speed Rail, this is far short of the \$2.5 billion appropriated in fiscal year 2010, and the \$50 billion that APTA recommends should be invested over the next six year.

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Finally, the President has proposed a new \$4 billion “National Infrastructure Innovation Finance Fund,” which if enacted into law by Congress, could provide new funding opportunities for public transportation and other transportation needs.

## **APTA POSITION**

- **APTA strongly urges Congress to appropriate no less than \$14.89 billion in FY 2011 for federal transit program to better address capital needs and the growing demand for transit service.**
- **We urge Congress to provide a minimum of \$2.5 billion for High Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail in FY 2011 to enable the Department of Transportation to move forward aggressively on critical corridor plans.**
- **APTA urges Congress to provide more than the \$50 million authorized for Positive Train Control grants under the FRA Railroad Safety Technology Program to assist Commuter Railroads in meeting the RSIA mandate on PTC.**