

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF STATE HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION OFFICIALS

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AASHTO Statement on Recently Passed Omnibus Appropriations Bill

*Statement: John Horsley AASHTO Executive Director
American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials
Subject: Appropriations Bill
Date: December 20, 2007*

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials is pleased that the Omnibus Appropriations bill maintains the full \$40.2 billion obligation limitation for the federal-aid highway program, authorized by SAFETEA-LU law and that it also allocates \$195 million in emergency funds to replace the I-35W bridge in Minnesota.

The appropriation of an additional \$1 billion dollars in bridge funding will assist all the states in addressing their bridge improvement needs.

We also applaud the continued federal support for Amtrak but regrettably the bill falls short of the authorized levels for transit particularly in the reduction of the “New Starts Program.” As cities and states explore options for addressing congestion federal funding guarantees should be honored.

Regrettably the bill also requires a rescission of \$4.107 billion, that when coupled with steps taken in the Energy bill mandating proportional appreciation of rescissions, will severely limit the ability of State Departments of Transportation to set their own spending priorities.

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Looking ahead; 2008 will be a pivotal year in which Congress will have just 10-short months to find a solution. Without Congressional action to offset the estimated \$5 billion cash shortfall in the Highway account of the highway Trust Fund, the highway program would have to be reduced from \$43 billion to \$26 billion in fiscal year 2009.

(You can find more information about this topic in the AASHTO report entitled “Revenue Sources to Fund Transportation Needs.” You can find the report at: www.transportationfuture.org)