



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 107th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

Vol. 148

WASHINGTON, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2002

No. 136—Part II

House of Representatives

□ 1700

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.J. RES. 123, FURTHER CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS, FISCAL YEAR 2003

(Continued)

However, along comes the Office of Management and Budget and based on some vague language they derived out of section 110 of the CR, misinterpreted that law to cut highway funding and establish a pro-rata share of only \$27.7 billion, which is \$4.1 billion less than the fiscal year 2002 funding level.

This is consistent with the Administration's attempt to cut highway infrastructure investment as expressed in its message to Congress, but it is not consistent with Congressional intent. It had to be corrected. So the chairman of our committee, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), and I worked together to include language in the third continuing resolution to reverse the OMB interpretation and ensure that the Federal-aid highways program obligation limitation be continued at the fiscal year 2002 rate, that is, \$31.8 billion, until Congress passes the Transportation Appropriations Conference Report.

Congress, not OMB, makes that determination. Our language did reverse the OMB interpretation. So far so good.

But then along came the House Republican leadership. They insisted on some additional language to reintroduce the \$27.7 billion number of the Transportation Appropriation committee-reported bill.

Well, a week ago the director of OMB, Mitch Daniels, said "I think \$27 [billion] is the right number"; but that is not what the CR said. So we insisted, I think we got OMB's attention, and OMB and the Federal Highway Administration have now issued guidance to States to provide the pro-rata share at the \$31.8 billion level. Unfortunately, that language that the House Republican leadership insisted on has clouded the picture.

Suffice it to say, I think we have a short-term fix that keeps the transportation program on the level provided for in TEA-21 up through, perhaps, August of next year. Then the whole program will crash back down to the \$27.7 billion level, and States will lose a lot of money and a lot of construction jobs.

Now the wish is and the hope is, and the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. PETRI), the chairman of the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit, and I both hope that Congress will come to its senses and fix that problem between now and then. But the reality is that States have to be able to plan

long term. They cannot plan much longer than August of 2003, at which time the program crashes back to \$27.7 billion and we lose 195,000 good-paying jobs in our economy.

What is worse is that States now are looking ahead and saying I do not think we can plan that far ahead.

Mr. Speaker, we will on our side move to defeat the previous question and offer an amendment that will fix this problem, and we ought to defeat the previous question. We ought to come back with fixed language that restores the total intent of TEA-21 and keep our transportation programs on schedule. These are Highway Trust Fund dollars. These are monies that could be set aside in the guaranteed account. They will help lift this economy up; and if Members believe in transportation and are sick of sitting in traffic congestion and believe in moving America forward, then they need to defeat the previous question and restore those dollars now, rather than waiting for some future point next year when we may or may not be able to restore the \$31.8 billion. This provides short-term benefit, and long-term uncertainty which is bad for highway programs, bad for transportation programs, bad for American jobs.

NOTICE

Effective January 1, 2003, the subscription price of the Congressional Record will be \$434 per year or \$217 for six months. Individual issues may be purchased for \$6.00 per copy. Subscriptions in microfiche format will be \$141 per year with single copies priced at \$1.50. This price increase is necessary based upon the cost of printing and distribution.

Michael F. DiMario, *Public Printer*

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



Printed on recycled paper.

H7953