



FY'18 Approps

On July 17th, 2017 the House Appropriations Committee passed its FY 2018 Transportation Housing and Urban Development (THUD) spending measure. The bill honors FAST Act funding levels for FY'18 by providing \$44.2B in federal-aid highway obligation limitation and \$9.7B in transit formula dollars. Unlike the President's FY'18 budget proposal, the House proposes to retain similar funding levels for Essential Air Service and Amtrak from FY'17. However, other general fund programs see a cut: TIGER grants are zeroed out (from \$500M) and Capital Investment Grants (CIG) for transit including New Starts is reduced by \$660M.



The package also includes an \$800M rescission of contract authority to offset other spending in the THUD package, which would take effect on November, 30, 2017. This is on the heels of just-enacted \$856M rescission on June 30, 2017, directed by the final FY'17 appropriations measure in May, and ahead of the large FAST Act-mandated \$7.6B rescission on July 1, 2020. Certain categories like national-purpose programs (e.g., federal lands, TIFIA, INFRA grants, FHWA admin, etc.), earmarks, suballocated STBGP, HSIP, and Rail-Highway Crossing are exempt from rescission. The proportionality requirement across programs categories is also retained, which limits states' flexibility in applying the rescission.cont on page 3

INFRA Grants

On June 28th, 2017 the US Department of Transportation issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for FY 2017 and FY 2018 Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects program that was authorized in the 2015 FAST Act. This funding opportunity is primarily for highway freight projects of at least \$100 million, although a small percentage will be allocated to smaller projects costing less than \$100 million. Approximately \$1.56 billion is expected to be awarded, pending FY 2018 appropriations.



Eligible applicants are a State or group of states; a metropolitan planning organization with a population of more than 200,000; a local government or group of local governments; a political subdivision of a State or local government; a special purpose district or public authority with a transportation function; a Federal land management agency that applies jointly with a State or group of states; a tribal government; or a multi-State or multi-jurisdictional group of public entities. CDOT will work to identify up to three CDOT applications on State highways. Applications are due November 2, 2017. The NOFO can be found at <https://www.transportation.gov/buildamerica/infra/infra-notice-funding-opportunity>

CDOT Goes Driverless

The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) uses trucks with rear-mounted attenuators — also known as a crash cushions — in mobile work zones to act as a barrier to absorb or deflect vehicles that would otherwise hit people or equipment. These “impact protection trucks” protect workers and are usually the first and only crash barrier between workers and the traveling public. Impact protection trucks are designed to be hit, putting their drivers at a greater risk of being involved in a crash. CDOT, through its RoadX program, will launch an Autonomous Impact Protection Truck pilot project that uses self-driving technology to eliminate the need for a driver in the vehicle, taking them out of harm’s way while still effectively protecting roadside workers.

The Autonomous Impact Protection Truck will follow a manned maintenance vehicle (the leader vehicle). The leader vehicle transmits position, speed and direction to the impact protection truck so it can follow in the leader vehicle’s exact path. The impact protection truck will also carry radar obstacle detection systems to detect anything unusual in their path and avoid collisions. CDOT/RoadX is looking into equipping the Autonomous Impact Protection Truck with a Dedicated Short-Range Communication (DSRC) radio, turning the vehicle into a mobile DSRC Roadside Unit (RSU). This will allow the truck to send real-time information about its location, speed and direction to other “connected vehicles” and the Vehicle-to-Everything (V2X) Data Ecosystem.



CDOT's Driverless Attenuator Truck

CDOT is encouraging peer organizations to get involved with the project. Learn more or get engaged through a peer exchange by contacting Joe Meyer at 303-512-5502.

Distracted Driving

Fatalities on the state’s highways continue to rise. Last year a record number of more than 600 people died. This year, fatal crash numbers are already ahead of last year’s. As anyone who drives on the highways knows, many factors influence the frequency of vehicle crashes with one significant cause being an increase in distracted driving.

Legislators representing districts in the Denver metro area passed a bill last session that addresses one part of the distracted driving epidemic. Sen Court and Rep Melton sponsored Senate Bill 27, which increased to \$300 the fine for misusing a phone while driving. Testimony for the bill included a broad cross section of the driving public. The most influential group speaking at the committee

hearings were motorcyclists retelling the story of loved ones who died at the hands of people texting while driving their cars. This moving testimony convinced Senators on the State Affairs committee to work on a bipartisan approach towards passing the bill. Ultimately, the bill passed with overwhelming support from both parties and the Governor signed the bill.

**Next Up In Our Legislative
Closer Looks**

September: Pollinator Highway

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Then on July 27, 2017 the Senate Appropriations Committee passed its FY'18 package for Transportation-Housing and Urban Development (THUD). The bill honors the FY'18 FAST Act funding levels for all Highway Trust Fund programs by providing obligation limitation at \$44.2B for federal-aid highways and \$9.7B for transit formula grants. Unlike the House measure there is no restriction on contract authority.

In general, compared to the President's proposal and the House bill, the Senate bill adheres closest to current program funding levels by including \$550M for TIGER discretionary grants, \$155M for Essential Air Services, \$2.1B for transit Capital Investment Grants, and \$1.6B for Amtrak. It also raises the cap on Passenger Facility Charge for originating airports from \$4.50 to \$8.50 and provides New Starts transit capital funding to backstop new full-funding grant agreements.

With two appropriations bills with significant differences making their way through Congress, the outcome is unclear. What is becoming more and more likely is that spending bills will not be completed before October 1, the beginning of Federal Fiscal Year 2018. We are likely to see a Continuing Resolution to extend current year spending until final FY'18 appropriations bills are completed.

For more information on the federal budget or other federal issues contact CDOT Federal Liaison, Ron Papsdorf at 303-757-9105.

TLRC Hits The Road

The Transportation Legislative Review Committee (TLRC) began their summer travels around the state in July, visiting areas in western Colorado. The bipartisan group of legislators travelled to Buena Vista and heard from the Mayor and Chaffee County Commissioner about the highway project on US highway 24, which also serves as a main street for the town. Flood mitigation, safe pedestrian crossings and new striping all served to provide a better environment for tourists, walking and driving.

The group continued on to Montrose where they met with local government representatives and regional planning partners over dinner. The next day legislators saw firsthand the Grand Avenue bridge project in Glenwood Springs and heard about the challenges associated with managing traffic and construction during the 95 day window when the old bridge is demolished and the new bridge rises. At the final stop of the trip, the TLRC toured the Eisenhower/Johnson Memorial Tunnel on I-70, witnessing the complexities that come with running operations on the highest vehicular tunnel in the nation.



TLRC visits the EJMT during their July roadtrip

The TLRC is scheduled to visit NE Colorado in mid-August, NW Colorado in late August and SE Colorado in late October. For more information on upcoming TLRC tours or legislative issues, contact CDOT Legislative Liaison, Andy Karisian at 303-757-9703.