



CITIZENS for REGIONAL TRANSIT NEWS

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September, 2009

Second-Chance for Congress

Last April, Anne P. Canby, president of the Surface Transportation Policy Partnership (STPP), a national transportation reform coalition, testified before the Senate Commerce and Transportation committees.

Her testimony (transact.org) deserves wider distribution, as Congress faces the September 30,2009, deadline for reauthorizing the current transportation act, SAFETEA-LU.

She noted that the first transportation act of 1991, known as ISTEA, included a declaration of transportation policy. That declaration “stressed the need for an energy efficient system that links American enterprise to world commerce, and improves productivity while addressing the mobility needs for the elderly, persons with disabilities and economically disadvantaged persons.”

Canby then described how the succeeding transportation acts failed to state any policy or to require adherence to the 1991 stated transportation policy.

Through the research of her organization, STPP, she described how transportation impacts every area of American life: climate emissions, energy dependence and use, public and personal pocket-books, economic efficiency, public health, and community quality of life.

Canby urged Congress to make this deadline an opportunity to create a completely new transportation act.

Will Congress establish “a national surface transportation policy with clear objectives, goals, outcomes” this time?

Will Congress accept the advice of Canby and other reformers, to create a real transportation policy?

We have a second chance.
Let’s not blow this one.

CRTC Monthly Meeting

Wednesday, September 16 12:00-1:00 PM

Issues to Raise for Federal Transportation Act

with

**Hal Morse, Executive Director,
Greater Buffalo Niagara Regional Transportation Council (GBNRTC)**

Hal Morse will present the current status of the Federal Transportation Act, which must be reauthorized by September 30, 2009.

In response, CRTC President Gladys Gifford will share the coordinated strategy of transit advocacy organizations, to urge citizen involvement in shaping the next transportation act.

Join us!

Citizens for Regional Transit meets at:

617 Main Street, Market Arcade Building, Buffalo

Meeting space is available courtesy Preservation Buffalo-Niagara.

CRTC meetings are free and open to the public.

Congress gears up for Transportation Reauthorization

www.apta.com

August Recess – Wrap up and Upcoming Congressional Agenda

On August 7, the U.S. Senate adjourned for four weeks, marking the beginning of Congress' annual August recess. The U.S. House of Representatives adjourned for the recess the prior week. Both chambers are scheduled to return for remaining legislative business on September 8.

While health care reform is expected to dominate the remainder of the legislative session, Congress must tackle several outstanding issues important to public transportation. These issues include completion of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 Appropriations bills, the passage of a long-term surface transportation authorization bill or an extension of current transportation programs, and climate change legislation.

[Transit advocates] should contact their members of Congress in the weeks ahead to make transit's case on all these legislative issues.

Surface Transportation Authorization Outlook Unclear

Upon its return from August recess, Congress will be faced with enacting a long term surface transportation authorization bill, or an extension of current programs, prior to the expiration of SAFETEA-LU on September 30.

Considering the short time remaining prior to the expiration of SAFETEA-LU, it is likely that an extension will be required.

House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee Chairman James L. Oberstar (D-MN) is still working on gaining broader support for the six-year legislation that sets federal transportation policy and spending ceilings for public transportation, rail, highway, and bridge programs.

This draft bill, jointly introduced by Chairman Oberstar and Ranking Member John Mica (R-FL), would increase public transit funding by 90 percent over current levels over the six-year authorization period. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) would receive \$99.8 billion for public transportation funding. The legislation also authorizes \$50 billion for the creation of a High Speed Rail network.

Chairman Oberstar has indicated that if the bill is not completed prior to the September 30 deadline, he would favor a short, 3 to 6 month extension of SAFETEA-LU, to keep pressure on the Congress to pass a long-term bill as quickly as possible.

Due to the crowded legislative agenda and limited time remaining before SAFETEA-LU expires, the Obama Administration is backing an 18-month extension of the current programs. In the Senate, the Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee and the Environment and Public Works Committee have separately approved bills extending the current program for 18 months, but the exact length of any extension is expected to be a major topic of discussion in September.

Putting aside questions over the bill's timeline for passage, the most challenging aspect of the legislation is reaching consensus on how to finance the increased investment in transit, high-speed intercity passenger rail and highway programs that authorizing committees in both the House and Senate are considering.

In addition, even a short-term extension must also include new revenues to ensure that the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) remains solvent into the future, since current revenues will not cover the costs of even the current program funding through the upcoming fiscal year.

On August 7, President Barack Obama signed H.R. 3357 into law, which provides funding to cover an anticipated shortfall in the HTF through September 30. Funding for the Mass Transit Account of the HTF was not included, because projections indicate that there will be sufficient funds to cover spending for transit programs through FY 2010. However, if an 18-month extension is approved, it may be necessary to add funding for both the highway and mass transit accounts of the HTF to ensure that there are sufficient resources to fund all programs for the duration of that period.

Citizens Regional Transit Corp.

aims to improve and expand bus and rail transit for all of WNY through citizen involvement and education.

Join us! Membership dues are fully tax-deductible:

corporate	\$150.00
household	35.00
individual	25.00
student	5.00

send check to:

CITIZENS REGIONAL TRANSIT CORP.

c/o John K. Howell, treasurer
289 Ashford Avenue
Tonawanda, NY 14150-8563

NYS request: \$565 million for fast trains

...by Brian Tumulty, via PressConnects.com, Greater Binghamton 8-24-09

WASHINGTON -- New York state is requesting \$565 million in federal stimulus money to begin developing high speed rail service along the Empire Corridor between Buffalo and New York City.

In an application filed Monday [8-24-09], the state proposed 38 projects. They include a \$46.1 million project to improve signals on the Upper Hudson Line between Croton-Harmon and Poughkeepsie to accommodate higher-speed trains, and a \$48.6 million project for the Rochester train station for track realignment and to design and build a passenger platform to replace the grade-level platform now in use.

Congress approved \$8 billion for high-speed rail projects as part of the \$787 billion American Recovery and Reinvestment Act earlier this year. All of the money must be awarded -- although not necessarily spent - by the end of September 2012.

The Federal Railroad Administration has said it will award grants for ready-to-go projects on a rolling basis beginning next month....

Making Amtrak passenger rail service more frequent between Albany and Buffalo would require building a third track dedicated to high-speed rail.

But before that happens, the state must eliminate a bottleneck between the Albany-Rensselaer rail station and the Schenectady station by building a second main track. The state requested \$91.2 million for that project.

The state's application includes a request for \$58.1 million to design and build an initial section of a dedicated third passenger track in the Rochester area.

in Memorium

Russell Pawlek, 1950-2009

Michael Miller, 1958-2009

community leaders
in the effort to restore
Central Terminal

faithful friends of CRTA

Moving Cooler: New Study shows Public Transit+ Can Save \$112 Billion Annually and Help Environment

...www.apta.com

Expanded public transit strategies coordinated with combining travel activity, land use development, operational efficiencies can reduce greenhouse gases (GHG) by 24 percent, according to the study entitled Moving Cooler. It estimates that the annual savings in vehicle costs to consumers exceed the cost of enacting these strategies by as much as \$112 billion.

Moving Cooler is a comprehensive analysis sponsored by one of the most diverse group of transportation interests which include public/private entities such as: Shell Oil, the Federal Highway Administration, the Urban Land Institute, American Public Transportation Association, Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Resource Defense Council, and many others.

FAST FACTS.....

Giving people the option to get around using cleaner alternatives could reduce transportation emissions 24% by 2050.

Source: Moving Cooler: An Analysis of Transportation Strategies for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions, July 2009

---www.t4america.org

**5th Annual Environmental Summit
Daemen College, Wick Center**

September 26, 2009

Registration: 8:30-9:00 AM

Opening Speakers: 9:00-10:00 AM

Sen. Antoine Thompson on NYS Senate Environmental Committee
Community Foundation on their Environmental Alliance
Introductions of organizations and businesses at information tables,
(including CRTC)

Tables and Networking 10:00-11:00 AM

Workshops: 11:00-11:45 AM

“Saving Money, Saving Energy”; Brian Smith, Citizens Campaign for the
Environment and Lori Borowick, NYSERDA

“Home Water Conservation”; John Jackson, Great Lakes United

“Weatherizing Your Home”; Greg Stoner, Painter’s Union

“Composting, Lawn and Landscaping”; Josh Ring and students,

Nichols School and Tim Vanini

Closing Remarks: 11:45 AM-noon

Optional Eco-Tours: 12:00-12:30 PM

Continental Breakfast included! Event is free!

**Register on-line now,
at daemen.edu/academics/centersinitiatives/CSCCE**

CALENDAR

**Sept. 16 12:00 noon
CRTC Monthly Meeting
617 Main Street, Buffalo**

Sept. 23 7-9 PM – LWVBN
forum “Government Change:
More than Dollars and Cents”
4255 Harlem Rd., Amherst

Sept. 26 8:30 AM-12:00 noon
Environmental Summit
Daemen College (p. 4)

Oct. 7 9:30 AM
GBNRTC PCC meeting
NYS Thruway Authority
455 Cayuga Road, Cheektowaga

Oct. 7 7-9:00 PM -- LWVBN
forum on Buffalo waterfront
4255 Harlem Rd., Amherst

Oct. 20, 2009 4 to 5:30 PM
Cornell ILR, 237 Main Street-Suite
1200, Buffalo, Partnership for the
Public Good forum
“Investing in Public Transit.” --
www.ppgbuffalo.org

**Oct. 21 12:00 noon
CRTC Monthly Meeting
617 Main Street, Buffalo**

Citizens Regional Transit Corporation

617 Main Street

Buffalo, NY 14203

return service requested