



House Transportation Bill Threatens Hundreds of Millions of Dollars for Bus and Rail Service

House committee votes to eliminate pedestrian, bicycle safety programs

Contact: Steven Higashide, 212.268.7474

A bill being considered by the House of Representatives would put hundreds of millions of dollars for public transportation at risk in Connecticut, advocates warned. The bill comes on the heels of another House proposal to eliminate dedicated funding for pedestrian and bicycle safety programs.

Tomorrow, the House Ways & Means Committee will consider a federal transportation funding bill (HR 3864) that would eliminate dedicated funding for public transportation. Instead, public transportation would be funded by general taxes and be subject to the unpredictable yearly budget process. Advocates urged members of the committee to vote the bill down.

“This proposal would turn one of the most reliable funding sources for transit into one of the least reliable,” said Kate Slevin, executive director of the Tri-State Transportation Campaign. “It would subject public transportation funding to Congress’s political whims and annual battles.”

For example, ConnDOT plans to spend \$858 million on public transportation projects in fiscal year 2012; of that, \$465 million would come from federal funds. These types of funds would be at risk going forward.

“Many in Congress have touted transportation legislation as a jobs bill,” said Steven Higashide, federal advocate for the Tri-State Transportation Campaign. “But this bill would make it harder for Connecticut residents to get to work and endanger thousands of construction jobs.”

The House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee is also voting today on a long-term transportation policy bill that would eliminate the major federal funding programs for pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements – Transportation Enhancements and Safe Routes to School, which make up only 2% of all federal transportation spending. This morning, a bipartisan amendment to restore these programs failed on a vote of 27-29.

The Tri-State Transportation Campaign is a non-profit advocacy and policy organization working for a more sustainable transportation network in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Visit www.tstc.org.