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NEWS: Senate Committee Approves FY2019 Transportation, HUD Appropriations Bill

1 message

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RICHARD SHELBY OF ALABAMA, CHAIRMAN

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COMMITTEE APPROVES FY2019 TRANSPORTATION, HUD APPROPRIATIONS BILL

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Senate Appropriations Committee today advanced the **FY2019 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related (THUD) Appropriations Act** that provides funding to advance transportation infrastructure development, housing assistance, and community development.

The bill provides \$71.4 billion in discretionary spending for the U.S. Department of Transportation, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and related agencies. The bill is \$1.1 billion above FY2018 enacted levels. The bill was approved 31-0.

The committee-passed measure targets funding toward improving our nation’s transportation and housing infrastructure, continuing to improve our air traffic control system, and maintaining rental assistance and community development programs.

“Our nation’s continued economic growth is directly impacted by critical investments in infrastructure and community development,” said **Senate Appropriations Committee Chairman Richard Shelby (R-Ala.)**. “Not only does this legislation assist families in need,

but it also funds programs that responsibly support our housing needs and improve our transportation system. I commend Senators Collins and Reed for their bipartisan work on this bill.”

“This bipartisan bill is the product of considerable negotiation and compromise. I worked closely with Ranking Member Reed in drafting this bill, and we received input from 70 Senators with more than 800 requests, all of which we carefully evaluated,” said **U.S. Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine)**, chairman of the Senate Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Subcommittee. “The funding in this legislation will allow us to invest in our nation’s infrastructure, while fully funding the renewal of housing assistance for low-income seniors and other vulnerable populations, such as teenagers and veterans who are homeless.”

Bill Highlights:

The bill prioritizes funding for critical transportation projects, programs to encourage economic growth and efficiency, and core housing programs for the nation’s most vulnerable individuals.

Transportation – \$26.6 billion in discretionary appropriations for the U.S. Department of Transportation for FY2019. This is \$698 million below the FY2018 enacted level. Within this amount, priority is placed on programs to improve the safety, reliability, and efficiency of the transportation system.

- **BUILD Grants** – \$1 billion for Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grants, previously known as TIGER grants.
- **Highways** – \$46 billion from the Highway Trust Fund for the Federal-aid Highways Program, consistent with the FAST Act. In keeping with the two-year budget agreement’s emphasis on infrastructure investments, the bill provides \$3.3 billion in additional funding for highway programs, including \$90 million to eliminate hazards at railway-highway grade crossings and \$800 million for bridge repairs. The bill maintains flexibility for State Departments of Transportation to repurpose some stagnant project funding for current infrastructure projects.
- **Aviation** – \$17.7 billion in total budgetary resources for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which fully funds all air traffic control personnel, including more than 14,000 air traffic controllers, and more than 25,000 engineers, maintenance technicians, safety inspectors, and operational support personnel.

The bill provides \$1 billion for FAA Next Generation Air Transportation Systems (NextGen) programs, and provides not less than \$168 million for the Contract Towers

program. The bill also provides \$750 million in additional funding for airport improvements.

- **Rail** – \$2.8 billion for the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). This includes \$1.9 billion to Amtrak for the Northeast Corridor and National Network, continuing service for all current routes. The bill provides \$262 million for FRA safety and operations, as well as research and development activities.

Additionally, the bill provides \$255 million for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvement grants program, \$300 million for Federal-State Partnership for State of Good Repair grants, and \$10 million for Restoration and Enhancement grants.

- **Transit** – \$13.5 billion for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Transit formula grants total \$9.9 billion, from the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund, consistent with the FAST Act. In addition, \$800 million is provided from the general fund for transit infrastructure grants. The bill provides a total of \$2.6 billion for Capital Investment Grants (CIG), fully funding all current “Full Funding Grant Agreement” (FFGA) transit projects, as well as new projects that have met the rigorous criteria of CIG.
- **Maritime** – \$818 million for the Maritime Administration to increase the productivity, efficiency, and safety of the nation’s ports and intermodal water and land transportation. The Maritime Security Program is funded at \$300 million.

The bill includes \$40 million for State Maritime Academies (SMAs) and an additional \$300 million for a new National Security Multi-Mission Vessel. This training ship is essential for the SMAs to provide the nation with a strong merchant marine workforce.

- **Safety** – The legislation contains funding for the various transportation safety programs and agencies within the U.S. Department of Transportation. This includes \$956 million in total budgetary resources for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and \$667 million for the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration. The bill also includes \$275 million for the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration to help address safety concerns related to recent pipeline and crude oil by rail accidents.

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) – \$44.5 billion in discretionary appropriations for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, an increase of \$1.8 billion above the FY2018 enacted level.

- **Rental Assistance** – HUD rental assistance programs provide housing assistance for nearly 5 million vulnerable families and individuals. Of those receiving assistance, 57 percent are elderly or disabled. This bill provides necessary increases to continue assistance to all families and individuals currently served by these programs.

Included in the bill is: \$22.8 billion for tenant-based Section 8 vouchers; \$7.5 billion for public housing; \$11.7 billion for project-based Section 8; \$678 million for Housing for the Elderly; and \$154 million for Housing for Persons with Disabilities.

- **Community Planning and Development** – \$7.8 billion for Community Planning and Development programs, \$99 million above the FY2018 enacted level. The Community Development Block Grant formula program is funded at \$3.3 billion; the Homeless Assistance Grants are funded at \$2.6 billion; the HOME program is funded at \$1.4 billion; and the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS program is funded at \$375 million.
- **Emphasis on Homelessness** – \$2.6 billion for homeless assistance programs and includes several provisions to improve HUD’s delivery of housing and services to address particularly vulnerable populations, including veterans, youth, and survivors of domestic violence. The bill includes \$20 million for new family unification vouchers to prevent youth exiting foster care from becoming homeless. An additional \$80 million is provided for grants and technical assistance to test comprehensive efforts to end youth homelessness in urban and rural areas. In addition, the bill provides \$50 million for rapid rehousing assistance for domestic violence, and \$40 million for new HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) vouchers.
- **Preventing Lead Hazards** – \$260 million to combat lead hazards, \$30 million above the FY2018 enacted level. These grants will help communities protect children from the harmful effects of lead hazard poisoning.

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