

STIMULUS PACKAGE AND REAUTHORIZATION

Background

The U.S. Congress is discussing the potential creation of a funding bill to kick start the national economy. The bill is known as the Economic Recovery and Revitalization Act (ERR) and will fund a broad spectrum of activities. The ERR will provide funding for activities related to low-income housing and mortgage foreclosure abatement to business and personal tax cuts to infrastructure improvements such as transportation and water.

The transportation portions of the House and Senate versions of the ERR bill are as follows:

	House (in billions)	Senate (in billions)
Highways & Bridges	\$30.00	\$27.06
Transit	\$9.00	\$8.40
Aviation	\$3.00	\$1.10
Rail	\$0.30	\$0.25
Secretary Discretionary		\$5.50

In order to produce one ERR bill, the House and Senate designates members to meet in conference to iron out the differences between the two versions. The conference committee has been meeting since February 10, 2009. There is some expectation that they will produce a unified version of the Economic Recovery and Revitalization Act in advance of February 16, 2009.

Current Status

H-GAC staff is in receipt of some preliminary information on the transportation portions of the conference committee report. This information was received on February 12, 2009 and is highly subject to change prior to final passage of the bill.

The conference bill numbers are as follows:

Program	Highways (in billions)	Transit (in billions)	Grants (in billions)
Highway & Bridge Improvements	\$27.50		
Transit Improvement		\$8.40	
High Speed Rail		\$8.00	
Competitive Grants			\$1.50
TOTALS	\$27.50	\$16.40	\$1.50

If the conference committee numbers are ultimately adopted, the State of Texas would receive roughly \$2.20 - \$2.50 billion in transportation ERR funding. It remains to be seen how a portion of that funding would be suballocated to the MPO regions. There is also a possibility that the Texas Transportation Commission could use some of the ERR funding targeted to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to select projects in our region.

Action Requested

None