

H-GAC Reports on Transportation Planning Activities

H-GAC Board Actions

a. Emission Control Area for Ocean-Going Ships

Approved recommendation to the International Maritime Organization and Marine Environmental Protection Committee supporting the creation of a continuous coastal Emission Control Area with Canada and possibly Mexico.

b. Baytown Express Park & Ride Service

Approved execution of a third year funding agreement with Harris County Community Service Department to continue implementation of park and ride service; amount not to exceed \$161,184.

Surface Transportation Authorization

The Obama Administration and the U.S. Senate have indicated that they prefer an 18-month extension of the current surface transportation bill which is set to expire on September 30, 2009. The extension is being contemplated because the Administration and the Senate believe that the current economic climate is not favorable for introducing the kinds of tax/fee increases that would be necessary to fund surface transportation properly. The hope is that the economy will improve over the next 18 months and make a tax increase vote more palatable for congressional members.

Items of note:

A possible rescission of federal funds in September 2009 - could mean a loss of \$750 million in federal transportation funding for the Houston-Galveston region if it is not repealed before the end of the federal fiscal year.

Highway Trust Fund - Congress has acted to prevent a shortfall by transferring \$8 billion in general revenue to shore up the Fund. It is expected that the transfer will keep the program running until Spring 2010.