

House Bill Puts Transportation Programs in Reverse

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Next week, the House is expected to debate [H.R. 7](#) “American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act.” The bill is the long awaited legislative product to reauthorize a number of federal highway, transit, rail, planning, trail and other programs. Unfortunately, H.R. 7 doesn’t look to be long term solution to our nation’s surface transportation problems.

H.R. 7 provides roughly \$260 billion over five years for transportation needs including roads and bridges, bus and rail, and other programs. Regrettably, the proposal removes the small funds from transit in the motor fuel tax and redirects it into highway spending. This means that projects to support or expand bus, light rail and other transit efforts would no longer have a predictable funding source. Projects like these would be subject to yearly funding battles in the appropriations process that would pit programs against each other for funds. This is a sad development that would likely yield minimal investment in modes of transportation that help to ease congestion on our already crowded streets.

USGBC [joined more than 75 national organizations](#) — including the Transportation for America, the American Public Transportation Association, American Society of Civil Engineers, and the National Association of Counties— and a list of other individuals and state & local groups urging the House Ways and Means Committee to reject policies that would undermine investment in transit programs, but unfortunately this effort largely fell on [deaf ears](#).

Transit advocate Congressman Earl Blumenauer (OR) summed up the bill with pinpoint accuracy. “Rather than taking a serious approach to strengthening our transportation system, this bill will make it more difficult for local communities to have the flexibility and support necessary to build and maintain transportation systems that serve all of their citizens, to offer transportation choices, and to encourage economic development.”

If you are interested in getting involved, please [voice your concerns](#) to Congress.

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