



U.S. Congressman
Nick Rahall
WORKING FOR WEST VIRGINIANS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TRANSPORTATION APPROPRIATION BILL PASSES HOUSE

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- U.S. Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV) today announced that the House of Representatives passed the conference agreement on the Fiscal Year 1991 Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations bill by a vote of 394-17. Of particular importance to southern West Virginia is the release of \$14.5 billion from the Highway Trust Fund for federal highway grants to assist in the construction and repair of the interstate highway system, and \$33.3 million for continued construction of eighteen miles of Corridor G from Williamson to Charleston.

"Passage of this bill goes hand in hand with my recent efforts to bring increased federal funding to southern West Virginia," Rahall remarked. "Our economic developments depends upon transportation to and from our region. The funds in this bill mark the beginning of an infrastructural revolution in our State which could go a long way toward solving some of our problems."

The bill appropriates \$13 billion for FY1991 funding for the Department of Transportation and related agencies, including the Coast Guard, Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Railroad Administration and the Urban Mass Transit Administration. Rahall did express his displeasure at some funding reductions due to budgetary constraints, but added, "although I am strongly in favor of reducing the deficit and curing our budgetary sickness, economic development resulting from these necessary funds will create jobs to assist West Virginia's recovery."

Of significance in the package is an increase in funding of \$3 million to the total of \$26.6 million for the Essential Air Service program, which subsidizes airline service to smaller communities. Five West Virginia communities, including Bluefield and Beckley, would benefit from the program, which insures that small communities will not lose access to air transportation capabilities. This provision allays Rahall's fear that, "continued annual reductions for EAS would lead to its eventual elimination from Federal Aviation Administration programs."

Rahall also expressed particular pleasure with the \$894 million for the Federal Railroad Administration in this bill. This represents an increase of \$157 million over FY1990, which Rahall said will help bring Amtrak's Cardinal to full service in West Virginia.

In summing up the package, Rahall hailed it as "a realistic and healthy step in the right direction. Our need to balance the budget and reduce the deficit should not be perceived as a hurdle to bringing more funding to southern West Virginia. My emphasis on infrastructural development will allow West Virginia to contribute to America's climb out of debt through the increased opportunities that come with greater accessibility. This bill marks a first step in practical, responsible, planning for our future."

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STATEMENT
HONORABLE NICK J. RAHALL, II (D-WV)
IN SUPPORT OF H.R. 5229, TRANSPORTATION APPROPRIATIONS FOR FY 1991

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to rise in support of the
Transportation Appropriations bill for FY 1991.

This bill appropriates \$13 billion in FY 1991 for Transportation
Department and related agencies, which include the Coast Guard, Federal
Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration, Federal
Railroad Administration, and the Urban Mass Transit Administration.

This appropriation reflects a \$100 million reduction from the
House-passed bill, and \$69 million less than that made available in FY
1990. These reductions reflect our on-going efforts to bring
appropriations bills into conformance with the budget resolution, in
keeping with targeted deficit reduction goals.

First I would like to just say that I am very pleased that
Essential Air Service payments was increased by the conferees,
relecting a \$3 milion increase over the House-passed bill. These
payments go to subsidize airline services to smaller communities. It
was originally created as part of the deregulation of the airline

industry, to ensure that small communities would not lose access to vital air transportation. Five communities in WV will benefit under EAS, two of which -- Beckley and Bluefield -- are in my Fourth Congressional District. These are of vital importance, as WV continues its struggle toward economic stability by broadening its industrial base and strengthening its tourism industry. A loss of these funds would be a great deterrent to these efforts. While the funding level for EAS, at \$26.6 million reflects an increase over earlier proposals, it still is lower than last year's level. However, the increase also allays my fears that continued annual reductions for EAS would lead to its eventual elimination from Federal Aviation Administration programs. This would indeed be a serious setback for WV and other states which rely on EAS for assuring access to small communities via air transport.

FAA operations overall in this bill are funded at \$4 billion, equal to the House recommendation, and \$213 million more than last year. Within this amount, \$1.9 billion is for the operation of the air traffic control system, and \$470 million for aviation safety activities, representing \$49 million more than last year.

There are \$2.1 billion in the bill appropriated from the Airport Trust Fund, for airport facilities and equipment.

For grants to airports, the bill releases up to \$1.8 billion from the Airport and Airways Trust Fund in FY 1991 as grants-in-aid for airport planning, construction, and development. This amount is \$375 million more than last year, and \$300 million more than requested by the President.

This Measure, Mr. Chairman, authorizes the release of \$14.5 billion from the Highway Trust Fund for federal highway grants to assist in the construction and repair of the interstate highway system, secondary roads, and bridges. This is \$2.3 billion more than the FY 1990 funding level, and \$2.5 billion more than the President's request.

For Urban Mass Transit, the agreement appropriates \$1.9 billion for various mass transit programs under UMTA in FY 1991. It authorizes the release of \$1.4 billion from the mass transit account for discretionary mass transportation grants, providing \$222 million more for UMTA than in FY 1990, and \$970 million more than the Administration requested.

UMTA programs provide mass transportation capital and operating assistance to both urban and non-urban areas. Again, West Virginia relies upon this program for its rural and urban systems of travel. It is the foundation upon which the State has built the Tri-State authority in Huntington, WV, in my Fourth Congressional District.

These funding levels reflect the bipartisan commitment among Members of both bodies to continue to fund highway demonstration projects as well, in spite of the Administration's request to zero fund the projects.

The Federal Railroad Administration is funded at \$894 million in FY 1991, representing an increase of \$157 million more than last year.

Most of this funding will go to support AMTRAK, which is funded at \$625 million, \$20 million over last year's level.

To be parochial, Mr. Chairman, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the conferees for including vitally needed funding in the final bill that was not included in the House-passed version.

I am talking about the funding in the bill that will go toward completion of the Appalachian Highway System, a program authorized 25

years ago, but which still is only two-thirds complete. Conferees have included \$51.5 million for Corridor H improvements. This project stretches from Weston, WV to the Virginia line near Winchester, VA, and still lacks 116 miles before its completion. Even with this welcome \$51.5 million next year, the total outstanding completion costs are estimated to be close to \$1 billion. Corridor G, stretching from Williamson, WV to Charleston, which would be funded under this bill at \$33.3 million next year, still lacks 18 miles of freeway construction before it is completed, estimated to cost \$332 million in additional funding. And finally Mr. Chairman, Corridor D of the Appalachian Highway project, serving Wood County between Clarksburg and Parkersburg, is funded here at \$10 million next year, and still lacks 10 miles to completion. It is estimated that it will cost an additional \$182 million to complete construction of Corridor D.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to the able Chairman of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, Mr. Lehman of Florida. His energy and commitment toward protecting transportation projects that are so vital to our Congressional Districts, to our States as a

whole are well-documented. Again to my good friend Mr. Lehman, I convey my thanks and appreciation for his hard work in this conference, and that of his colleagues on the subcommittee.

I urge my colleagues to support this measure, which is of massive importance to my own constituency, as well as to the entire Nation.