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HIGHWAY REAUTHORIZATION

Although the legislation has not been formally introduced (therefore no bill # to reference), House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Jim Oberstar has drafted a comprehensive highway reauthorization proposal. The proposal is a good starting point for a number of key issues of concern to the trucking industry including a designated freight program, restrictions on tolling and public private partnerships, and a motor carrier safety title. What's missing from the proposal is the revenue title. In other words, how to pay for a \$450 billion program?

Chairman Oberstar agrees with ATA's position that the federal fuel tax should remain the primary funding mechanism for the highway program. In testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee, ATA Vice Chair Barbara Windsor testified that the fuel tax is the most efficient manner in which to raise revenues for the program. However, there is a great deal of reluctance from both House members and Senators to vote to increase the fuel tax. Hence, the desire from some quarters to pass an extension of the existing program for either 12 months or 18 months with no change in the fuel tax.

In the Senate, no bill has been introduced to provide a multi-year reauthorization proposal. Additionally, the chairmen of both the Environment and Public Works Committee and Commerce Committee have expressed their support for the Obama Administration's 18-month extension proposal.

ATA Position:

ATA supports efforts to enact a multi-year reauthorization proposal. While ATA recognizes the likely need for an extension, putting off needed reforms for 18 months will not solve the problems facing the program.

Good stuff.

