

SAFETEA-LU -- Now What?

Remarks of

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before

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About The Highway Users

The American Highway Users Alliance is an advocacy group that works in the public interest to improve highway travel.

We are not a trade association. But many of our members are associations, including AEMA, ARRA, and ISSA. Our other members are businesses.

Other members include local AAA clubs, trucking and bus associations, contractors, service station owners, materials suppliers, car makers, shopping center owners, energy companies, farm bureaus, etc.



About The Highway Users

How we get
the job
done:



Lobbying

Media

Grassroots



AMERICAN HIGHWAY USERS ALLIANCE
HIGHWAYS.ORG



SAFETEA-LU → A Good Bill (Mostly)

Positives

Guaranteed Funding thru '09

**Just about the biggest increase possible
without a gas tax increase**

Environmental Streamlining included

More money for Safety

Negatives

Problems with Research Funding

No money left after 2009

Not enough money to make a big difference



SAFETEA-LU → Last “TEA” Party?

- Spending faster than Highway User Fee revenue -- trust fund solvency problems
- Intense media criticism regarding “pork”
- Collapse of the “big tent” coalition
- TEA program structure no longer innovative -- many question purpose
- Lack of public interest -- 2 years delay unnoticed



Time For A Different Drink?

With problems come opportunities!

- **Who will redefine a national purpose to the federal highway program?**
 - **New chairmen in Congress?**
 - **Tolling/Privatization/Devolution Advocates?**
 - **A Different Big Tent Coalition?**
 - **The Right-Wing / The Left-Wing?**
 - **The Motoring Public and its Allies?**
 - **The Diversion Coalition?**



A “ReForm” Vision Will Replace “TEA”

The Highway Users Ideal

- User fee increases are needed but the program must be focused and gain public support before increases will fly politically.
- The federal program must focus on national and regional needs.
- Increased leverage of trucking and intermodal freight in debate.
- Elimination of as much diversion as possible – new diversion-free coalition needed.
- Performance-based program structure: Measurement for Safety, Congestion-Relief, and Innovation.



Business as usual not enough

34% of major roads are in poor or mediocre condition; 27% of bridges are functionally or structurally deficient, and 36% of our major urban roads are congestion.

- 300% increase in transit funding from highway users since 1991 created only a 17% increase in transit use
- Annual cost of urban congestion jumped from \$35 billion in 1991 to \$63 billion today
- VMT increasing at 26 times the rate of new capacity
- More people will die on the roads over the course of SAFETEA-LU than attended Super Bowl XL.
- No more money left in Highway Account



Highway Users Must Make the Case

- The public interest must be the #1 reason for moving past SAFETEA-LU
- Only through a reinvigorated lobbying, media, and grassroots effort will we avoid extremely long delays and a weak reauthorization bill.
- Construction-interests alone cannot make a compelling case without coalition help.
- Over the next 3 years, we must work together and present a compelling vision for safety and mobility to the American public.
- There won't be anymore TEA bills. What comes next? Will it be better or worse?

