# Politics Links Compiled Document

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## Obama Good

### Unpopular In Congress

#### Transportation bills face a rough time in Congress

**Schank, 6/16/2012** (Joshua, , President and CEO of the Eno Center for Transportation a neutral, non-partisan think-tank,The Federal Role in Transportation Part II: Four Ideas for Lesser Federal Involvement, http://www.enotrans.org/eno-brief/the-federal-role-in-transportation-part-ii-four-ideas-for-lesser-federal-involvement)

In a remarkable display of bipartisanship, Congress has finally passed a new surface transportation authorization bill, which is the first such legislation since SAFETEA-LU expired in 2009. The bill represents a substantial step forward in many respects, and we will provide a full analysis in the next Eno Brief. But while Congress faced many challenges in passing a new bill, perhaps the greatest challenge was the one they still have yet to deal with. This bill lacks a viable proposal for paying for stable or increased transportation expenditures in the long-term. Simultaneously, Congress still seems to be unwilling to cut expenditures to the levels at which they can be maintained within existing revenue streams. The bill that finally emerged from Congress is a short-term authorization financed with an influx of general revenues, and will not resolve the long-term funding issue. While we are still effectively in a policy stalemate with respect to funding for surface transportation, the new bill does specify some national goals and directs the development of specific performance measures to evaluate progress towards those goals. Congress is beginning to recognize that no matter what the eventual size of this program, federal funding should focus on areas of national interest. The challenge is to define exactly what that national interest should be, and this challenge is not limited to surface transportation.

#### Deficit spending controversial in Congress

**Schank, 4/16/2012** (Joshua, President and CEO of the Eno Center for Transportation a neutral, non-partisan think-tank, Is Partisanship the Problem?, http://www.enotrans.org/eno-brief/is-partisanship-the-problem)

While neither party is particularly thrilled with the idea of spending general revenues on transportation at the moment, Democrats are more willing to consider it. Witness the strong Democratic support for the Senate bill, as well as the President’s proposal to pay for more transportation spending with “savings” from ending the wars in the Middle East. Republicans seem to prefer using these offsets to trim the deficit instead of investing in transportation, though there is some clear division in the Republican party along these lines, as several Republicans voted for the Senate bill, and the House leadership proposed a bill with a large general fund offset that never went anywhere. The issue of how we deal with our deficit while also making necessary investments is a tricky one that several nations around the globe are currently struggling with. It is no surprise that our political parties are having a difficult time sorting it out, but there is room for compromise with some combination of deficit-reduction and spending increases.

#### Transportation spending is highly partisan

**Schank, 4/16/2012** (Joshua, President and CEO of the Eno Center for Transportation a neutral, non-partisan think-tank, Is Partisanship the Problem?, http://www.enotrans.org/eno-brief/is-partisanship-the-problem)

The partisan differences between the parties on the issue of transportation are likely resolvable. Admittedly, we are not immune from the larger political partisanship infecting the nation at the moment. The general lack of cooperation between both parties and lack of civility that pervades the political discourse also impacts transportation and makes the job more difficult. But there is little we can do about that. We can do something, however, about the definition of the federal role, which so far no one in Congress on either side of the aisle has really tried to address. The definition of the federal role is vital to moving forward because there is currently no agreed-upon purpose for the surface transportation program. We are so challenged by the new rules of bipartisan agreement – no new revenue, no earmarks, and no expanding the constituencies – that we seem to have no idea how to create a new bipartisan majority behind transportation in this new environment. Hence we find ourselves with the best-case scenario of passing an 18-month authorization bill using obscure offsets to maintain current investment levels. We are unlikely to ever secure funding – of any size – for a long-term transportation reauthorization unless we begin this discussion of the federal role and move beyond the discussion of funding. If we can begin the conversation about the federal role, and achieve some bipartisan consensus on that, we may just be able to also achieve consensus on funding. That is not to say this will be easy, but we should not let the appearance of rampant partisanship discourage us. Perhaps under such a compromise, funding levels will not be as high as they have been in the past. But in order to maintain past funding levels, transportation agencies have had to sacrifice any semblance of certainty or long-term planning capability. If we focused less on funding levels, and more on program purpose, we might just find ourselves in a better position.

#### **Transportation infrastructure spending unpopular among conservatives-Senate bill proves**

Johnson, 2012 (Fawn, correspondent for National Journal, covering a range of issues including immigration, transportation and education, Conservatives: Senate Bill Is 'Crap Sandwich', http://transportation.nationaljournal.com/2012/03/conservatives-senate-bill-is-c.php#173458)

It took a lot of whining, but the Senate finally passed its two-year, $109 billion surface transportation bill last week on a solidly bipartisan 74-22 vote. The bill won praise from the likes of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, AAA and the AFL-CIO. No one thinks that it's perfect, but it would smooth out some of the current kinks in the federal highway program and give the transportation industry certainty that they won't face federal cuts for two years. And yet...there are still some people who don't like it, and many of them are in the House. A GOP aide told me that Republican members see the Senate bill as "a crap sandwich that they're going to have eat" if they can't come up with an alternative. (That's proving to be something of a problem. House Speaker John Boehner has tried multiple options without getting his caucus to coalesce around one.) Outside the Capitol, Heritage Action for America, a right-wing grassroots group, considered a "no" vote on the Senate bill a "key vote" in determining whether a legislator is sticking to conservative principles. Conservatives are worried about a "spending boondoggle," which reflects their general anxiety about federal investment. They are also worried that the Senate bill preserves too much of the previous highway bill, which was loaded with earmarks. Sen. Mike Johanns, R-Neb., claims there is even an earmark in the Senate bill for Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. Reid hasn't commented. All this is to say that there is a wing of the conservative party that is gung ho about killing the Senate bill. For them, the legislation involves broader questions about federal spending and how Congress acted in previous years using earmarks and other special favors.

#### Transportation spending is unpopular in Congress.

**Freemark, 2012** (Yonah – Master of Science in Transportation from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Also a freelance journalist who has been published in Planning Magazine; Next American City Magazine; Dissent; The Atlantic Cities; Next American City Online; and The Infrastructurist – He created and continues to write for the website The Transport Politic – The Transport Politic – “On Infrastructure, Hopes for Progress This Year Look Glum” – January 25th, 2012 http://www.thetransportpolitic.com/2012/01/25/on-infrastructure-hopes-for-progress-this-year-look-glum/)

President Obama barely mentions the need for improvements in the nation’s capital stock in his State of the Union. The contributions of the Obama Administration to the investment in improved transportation alternatives have been significant, but it was clear from the President’s State of the Union address last night that 2012 will be a year of diminished expectations in the face of a general election and a tough Congressional opposition. Mr. Obama’s address, whatever its merits from a populist perspective, nonetheless failed to propose dramatic reforms to encourage new spending on transportation projects, in contrast to previous years. While the Administration has in some ways radically reformed the way Washington goes about selecting capital improvements, bringing a new emphasis on livability and underdeveloped modes like high-speed rail, there was little indication in the speech of an effort to expand such policy choices. All that we heard was a rather meek suggestion to transform a part of the money made available from the pullout from the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts — a sort of war dividend whose size is undefined — to “do some nation-building right here at home.” If these suggestions fell flat for the pro-investment audience, they were reflective of the reality of working in the context of a deeply divided political system in which such once-universally supported policies as increased roads funding have become practically impossible to pursue. Mr. Obama pushed hard, we shouldn’t forget, for a huge, transformational transportation bill in early 2011, only to be rebuffed by intransigence in the GOP-led House of Representatives and only wavering support in the Democratic Senate. For the first term at least, the Administration’s transportation initiatives appear to have been pushed aside. Even so, it remains to be seen how the Administration will approach the development of a transportation reauthorization program. Such legislation remains on the Congressional agenda after three years of delays (the law expires on March 31st). There is so far no long-term solution to the continued inability of fuel tax revenues to cover the growing national need for upgraded or expanded mobility infrastructure. But if it were to pass, a new multi-year transportation bill would be the most significant single piece of legislation passed by the Congress in 2012. The prospect of agreement between the two parties on this issue, however, seems far-fetched. That is, if we are to assume that the goal is to complete a new and improved spending bill, rather than simply further extensions of the existing legislation. The House could consider this month a bill that would fund new highways and transit for several more years by expanding domestic production of heavily carbon-emitting fossil fuels, a terrible plan that would produce few new revenues and encourage more ecological destruction. Members of the Senate, meanwhile, have for months been claiming they were “looking” for the missing $12 or 13 billion to complete its new transportation package but have so far come up with bupkis. The near-term thus likely consists of either continued extensions of the current law or a bipartisan bargain that fails to do much more than replicate the existing law, perhaps with a few bureaucratic reforms.

#### Skepticism about funding mechanisms make actual investment under current funding structures unpopular

Hart Research Associates and Public Opinion Strategies, 2011**(“**The Rockefeller Foundation Infrastructure Survey: Findings from a national survey of registered voters, conducted byHart Research Associates and Public Opinion Strategies” Feb 14 2011 [http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/uploads/files/80e28432-0790-4d42-91ec-afb6d11febee.pdf accessed tm 5/22/12](http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/uploads/files/80e28432-0790-4d42-91ec-afb6d11febee.pdf%20accessed%20tm%205/22/12))

A large majority of voters see room for improvement in how the government spends money on infrastructure and they endorse a host of reforms in this area. 64% of voters say that how the government currently spends money on building and maintaining our transportation infrastructure is inefficient and unwise, including one in four (26%) who says it is very inefficient. Just 32% say the government currently spends efficiently and wisely. Republicans (72% unwise) **and independents** (67% unwise) are particularly adamant that this is the case, though 56% of Democrats say that current spending is unwise as well. Given this attitude, it is unsurprising that the public supports a number of measures that would change the way in which transportation dollars are spent.

#### **GOP against infrastructure spending**

Marshall and Thomasson, 2011 (Will-president and founder of the Progressive Policy Institute, Scott-economic and domestic policy director for the Progressive Policy Institute, Sperling on “Deferred Maintenance”, http://progressivepolicy.org/tag/national-infrastructure-bank#ScottThomasson1)

President Obama’s $447 billion jobs plan includes some constructive – literally – provisions for upgrading America’s economic infrastructure. These shouldn’t be controversial: Who could be against putting people to work rebuilding the rickety foundations of U.S. productivity and competitiveness? Well, Republicans, that’s who. They have dismissed the president’s call for $50 billion in new infrastructure spending as nothing more than another jolt of fiscal “stimulus” masquerading as investment. It’s hard to imagine a more myopic example of the right’s determination to impose premature austerity on our frail economy. From Lincoln to Teddy Roosevelt to Eisenhower, the Republicans were once a party dedicated to internal nation building. Today’s GOP is gripped by a raging anti-government fever which fails to draw elementary distinctions between consumption and investment, viewing all public spending as equally wasteful.

#### **House Conservatives oppose transportation infrastructure spending**

Mitchell, 2011 (Josh, Staff reporter for the Wall Street Journal, Dueling Bills Seeks to Fund Road, Infrastructure Plans, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303544604576430314142653944.html)

Enacting big, multiyear highway bills was once a reliable ritual in Washington. Now, the conservative-led campaign against pork-barrel spending, and the bipartisan aversion to raising federal gasoline taxes, is putting the brakes on infrastructure spending, frustrating business groups and unions alike. House Transportation Committee Chairman John Mica (R., Fla.), who spent months drafting his bill, said he wanted to boost transportation funding but that political realities prevent him from doing so. In January, the new House Republican leadership imposed an in-house rule that forbids lawmakers from approving any new transportation funding that would add to the deficit.

#### **Congress hostile towards transportation infrastructure spending**

Freemark 12 (Yonah, Master of Science in Transportation from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Also a freelance journalist who has been published in Planning Magazine; Next American City Magazine; Dissent; The Atlantic Cities; Next American City Online; and The Infrastructurist – He created and continues to write for the website The Transport Politic – The Transport Politic, The President’s Budget: Full of Ambition, Short on Congressional Support, http://www.thetransportpolitic.com/2012/02/14/the-presidents-budget-full-of-ambition-short-on-congressional-support/)

The executive branch’s proposed spending for FY 2013 would greatly expand spending on transit and intercity rail, but it faces a hostile Congress. It brings good news, however, for five California rail projects and new light rail lines for Charlotte, Honolulu, and Portland. The White House has introduced a budget — and a reauthorization proposal — that would significantly increase investment in transportation infrastructure over the next six years. Though the legislation as currently designed will not be passed into law because of reluctance from Congress, the Obama Administration’s continued efforts to expand funding for sustainable mobility options are to be praised. Most of the President’s proposal is unlikely to see the light of day in the House of Representatives, controlled by Republicans newly hostile to the idea of using Highway Trust Fund revenues to pay for transit projects. Yet their proposal would create a $78 billion funding shortfall in the Highway Trust Fund over the next ten years according to an analysis by the Congressional Budget Office. That’s with $0 committed to transit! The Administration proposal, on the other hand, is fully funded (or at least accounted for\*) and would transform the Highway Trust Fund into the much more reasonably titled Transportation Trust Fund; the priorities of each piece of legislation are very clear. The defection of several House Republicans away from their own party’s transportation bill suggests that the legislation may not even get out of their chamber. At this point, the Senate’s bipartisan, mostly status-quo-extending two-year transportation reauthorization bill is now the most likely of all three proposals to be official government policy by the end of the spring. But even it faces the strong possibility of being ditched in favor of a simple extension of the existing bill, which will expire on March 31 according to the current law.

#### **GOP opposition to infrastructure spending**

Thoma, /26/12 (Mark, macroeconomist and time-series econometrician, associate professor of economics at the University of Oregon, The Political Empowerment of the Working Class is the Key to Better Employment Policy, Economist’s View, http://economistsview.typepad.com/economistsview/2012/06/the-political-empowerment-of-the-working-class-is-the-key-to-better-employment-policy-1-1.html)

We are also told that the deficit is too large already, but there’s still plenty of room to do more for the unemployed so long as we have a plan to address the long-run debt problem. But even if the deficit is a problem, why won’t Republicans support one of the many balanced budget approaches to stimulating the economy? Could it be that these policies invariably require higher income households to give something up so that we can help the less fortunate? Tax cuts for the wealthy are always welcome among Republicans no matter how it impacts the debt, but creating job opportunities through, say, investing in infrastructure? Forget it. Even though the costs of many highly beneficial infrastructure projects are as low as they get, and even though investing in infrastructure now would save us from much larger costs down the road – it’s a budget saver not a budget buster – Republicans leaders in the House are balking at even modest attempts to provide needed job opportunities for the unemployed. The imbalance in political power, obstructionism from Republicans designed to improve their election chances, and attempts by Republicans to implement a small government ideology are a large part of the explanation for why the unemployed aren’t getting the help they deserve. But Democrats aren’t completely off the hook either. Centrist Democrats beholden to big money interests are definitely a problem, and Democrats in general have utterly failed to bring enough attention to the unemployment problem. Would these things happen if workers had more political power?

#### **Partisan logjam makes passing transportation infrastructure bills difficult and unpopular**

Diaz, 2012 (Kevin, staff writer for the Star Tribune, Highway funding stuck in reverse, The Star Tribune, http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/lnacademic/)

Distracted by partisan battles, lawmakers are struggling to fund upgrades to a decades-old transportation infrastructure that highway engineers say is deteriorating faster than the nation's ability to keep up. The Senate remains at an impasse, but the House is working on a plan that would actually give Minnesota nearly $50 million less this year compared to last. The prospective cut mostly reflects the GOP-led ban on earmarks, which have provided the state with about $150 million in additional transportation dollars since 2010. Congress relies heavily on the federal gas tax to help fund highway upgrades, but the tax expires at the end of this month. With each passing day, transportation officials across the country are waiting to see whether lawmakers can break the partisan logjam, which has held up a major road bill -- in one form or another -- for 2 1/2 years. Meanwhile, House GOP leaders have debated scaling back a five-year, $260 billion plan. Democrats have assailed it as a "giveaway" to oil and gas interests while conservative groups such as the Club for Growth slam the bill for overspending.

#### **Transportation funding unpopular in Congress and with the public**

Natter, 2008 (Ari, associate editor for Traffic World, Transportation's Dividing Lines, Traffic World, http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/lnacademic/)

The lines for debate on highway and transportation funding for the coming years are set and they look more than ever like battle lines. Saying at least $225 billion a year is needed to maintain and upgrade the country's ailing transportation system, a federal commission formed to look at the nation's infrastructure and funding needs recommended a massive overhaul of how the United States manages and pays for its freight and passenger transportation systems. Congressional Republicans seized on the gas tax increase, with Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, assailing it as an "old, cold, bad idea." "An orange traffic cone could have come up with a gas tax increase," said Grassley, the ranking Republican on the Senate Finance Committee, which oversees tax issues. "Everyone knows most members of Congress will toss that recommendation right in the trash." Rep. John L. Mica, R-Fla., the ranking GOP member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, said the proposal amounted to a greater than 200 percent tax increase, also announced he was opposed to an increase in the user fee. "While I respect their hard work and efforts, the commission's recommendation of a dramatic increase in a gas tax does not stand a snowball's chance in hell of passing Congress," Mica said in a statement. Although many of the proposals offer substantial changes in existing programs, mixing in the increase in the gas tax will make it difficult to raising political capital for the proposals, said Robert W. Poole Jr., director of transportation studies at the Reason Foundation, a strong advocate of highway privatization. "Americans and their elected leaders don't understand the transportation system," said Stephen E. Flynn, the Jeanne K. Kirkpatrick Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. "Secondly, they don't value it, and thirdly, they don't have confidence in it."

#### **Infrastructure Spending unpopular among Republicans**

Easley, 2011 (Jason, political columnist for Politicus USA who specifically follow the legislative process, Obama Demands That The GOP Explain To America Why They Refuse To Create Jobs, http://www.politicususa.com/obama-demands-gop-jobs.html)

After Senate Republicans blocked a $60 billion infrastructure spending bill, President Obama released a statement demanding that the GOP explain to the American people why they refuse to create jobs. Once again, the Republican Party just doesn’t get it. Not only would they gain points with voters if they would have supported the infrastructure bill, but they also gave Obama a win by blocking the bill. Republicans don’t understand that every time they refuse to create jobs, they are allowing Obama to campaign both in favor of job creation and against the GOP. The Republican strategy is literally a case of cutting off your nose to spite your face. All of the pieces of the American Jobs Act that Republicans have defeated or blocked are very popular with voters. Every time the GOP has said no to job creation, they are also outing themselves to voters as the reason why jobs aren’t being created.

#### **Policymakers and public opposed to changing transportation infrastructure policies and funding**

GAO 2007 (report done by the Government Accountability Office, TRANSFORMING TRANSPORTATION POLICY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY, http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/lnacademic/http://www.lexisnexis.com/hottopics/lnacademic/)

The nation`s transportation network presents particularly complex policy challenges, because it encompasses many modes air, water, highway, transit, and rail on systems owned, funded, and operated by both the public and the private sectors. Furthermore, transportation decisions are inextricably linked with economic, environmental, and energy policy concerns. Addressing these challenges requires strategic and intermodal approaches, effective tools and programs, and coordinated solutions involving all levels of government and the private sector.1 Yet in many cases, the government is still trying to do business in ways that are based on conditions, priorities, and approaches that were established decades ago and are not well suited to addressing 21st century challenges. Addressing these challenges requires a fundamental reexamination of the nation`s transportation policies and programs. Congestion pricing. Participants also supported congestion pricing, which attempts to influence driver behavior by charging drivers higher prices during peak hours. However, participants noted that few states have actually implemented congestion pricing or other pricing techniques, which, they suggested, likely reflects initial public and political opposition to such proposals. The most common form of congestion pricing in the United States is high-occupancy toll (HOT) lanes, which are priced lanes that offer drivers of vehicles that do not meet the occupancy requirements the option of paying a toll to use lanes that are otherwise restricted for high-occupancy vehicles. Participants said that the current system has a lot of supporters and there is not currently enough unrest about the issues facing transportation infrastructure to motivate change on a large scale. Educating the public, the Congress, the private sector, environmental groups, and regional leaders on the consequences of the nation`s transportation problems is a key step to initiating change, according to participants. Participants said that the public, and others, are not connecting the efficiency of the transportation system with their overall quality of life. In addition, the message that transportation affects the global economy and is fundamental to the nation`s economic success is currently not widely recognized. Users must be convinced that it is in their interest to move towards change. Several participants agreed that emphasizing the impending ``crisis`` related to transportation might create an opportunity for change. Along these lines, they suggested messages for the public and others such as:

#### **GOP says hell no to Obama infrastructure spending policies**

**Fox News, 2010** (Obama's New Jobs Program: Stimulus II or GOP Obstacle Course?, http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/09/07/obamas-new-jobs-program-stimulus-ii-gop-obstacle-course/)

In a Labor Day speech in Milwaukee, Obama called for $50 billion more in infrastructure spending to rebuild roads, railways and runways -- a proposal that GOP leaders immediately cast as dead-on-arrival. The president taunted Republicans for consistently opposing his economic policies and said they seem to be running on a slogan of "No, we can't," playing off his 2008 presidential campaign mantra of "Yes we can." "In 2008, they gave him the key to the kingdom, the House, the Senate and White House, and there's not much the Republicans could have done," he said. "But I'll tell you what the Republicans should do. We shouldn't be the party of 'no,' we should be the party of 'Hell No' to the Obama policies." The House minority leader, John Boehner of Ohio, added, "We don't need more government 'stimulus' spending. We need to end Washington Democrats' out-of-control spending spree, stop their tax hikes and create jobs by eliminating the job-killing uncertainty that is hampering our small businesses."

### Unpopular with public

#### Public prefers fixing before building

**Hart Research Associates and Public Opinion Strategies, 2011(“**The Rockefeller Foundation Infrastructure Survey: Findings from a national survey of registered voters, conducted byHart Research Associates and Public Opinion Strategies” Feb 14 2011 [http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/uploads/files/80e28432-0790-4d42-91ec-afb6d11febee.pdf accessed tm 5/22/12](http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/uploads/files/80e28432-0790-4d42-91ec-afb6d11febee.pdf%20accessed%20tm%205/22/12))

**Indeed, two-thirds or more of respondents favor nine of the 10 reforms tested in the survey**, with the highest levels of support for holding government accountable for collecting data and certifying that all projects are delivered on time and fit into an overall national plan (90% favor), and **allowing local regions to have a greater say in how transportation dollars are used in their area (90% favor), and having a “fix it first” policy that focuses on maintaining existing transportation systems before building new ones (86% favor).**

#### Transportation Infrastructure funding unpopular with the public, problems aren’t visible

Orski, 2012(Ken, is editor and publisher of Innovation NewsBriefs, a widely read transportation newsletter. Orski has worked professionally in the field of transportation for close to 40 years. He served as Associate Administrator of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration under President Nixon and President Ford. New Geography,

http://www.newgeography.com/content/002662-why-pleas-increase-infrastructure-funding-fall-deaf-ears)

Finding the resources to keep transportation infrastructure in good order is a more difficult challenge. Unlike traditional utilities, roads and bridges have no rate payers to fall back on. Politicians and the public seem to attach a low priority to fixing aging transportation infrastructure and this translates into a lack of support for raising fuel taxes or imposing tolls. Investment in infrastructure did not even make the top ten list of public priorities in the latest Pew Research Center survey of domestic concerns. Calls by two congressionally mandated commissions to vastly increase transportation infrastructure spending have gone ignored. So have repeated pleas by advocacy groups such as Building America’s Future, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the University of Virginia’s Miller Center. Nor has the need to increase federal spending on infrastructure come up in the numerous policy debates held by the Republican presidential candidates. Even President Obama seems to have lost his former fervor for this issue. In his last State-of-the-Union message he made only a perfunctory reference to "rebuilding roads and bridges." High-speed rail and an infrastructure bank, two of the President’s past favorites, were not even mentioned. Why pleas to increase infrastructure funding fall on deaf ears There are various theories why appeals to increase infrastructure spending do not resonate with the public. One widely held view is that people simply do not trust the federal government to spend their tax dollars wisely. As proof, evidence is cited that a great majority of state and local transportation ballot measures do get passed, because voters know precisely where their tax money is going. No doubt there is much truth to that. Indeed, thanks to local funding initiatives and the use of tolling, state transportation agencies are becoming increasingly more self-reliant and less dependent on federal funding Another explanation, and one that I find highly plausible, has been offered by Charles Lane, editorial writer for the Washington Post. Wrote Lane in an October 31, 2011 Washington Post column, "How come my family and I traveled thousands of miles on both the east and west coast last summer without actually seeing any crumbling roads or airports? On the whole, the highways and byways were clean, safe and did not remind me of the Third World countries. ... Should I believe the pundits or my own eyes?" asked Lane ("The U.S. infrastructure argument that crumbles upon examination"). Along with Lane, I think the American public is skeptical about alarmist claims of "crumbling infrastructure" because they see no evidence of it around them. State DOTs and transit authorities take great pride in maintaining their systems in good condition and, by and large, they succeed in doing a good job of it. Potholes are rare, transit buses and trains seldom break down, and collapsing bridges, happily, are few and far between.

#### Public opposes new programs based on history of federal failure

A.G.C., 2011(“THE CASE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE & REFORM: Why and How the Federal Government Should Continue to Fund Vital Infrastructure in the New Age of Public Austerity” – THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF AMERICA – AGC’s Case for Infrastructure & Reform in based in large part on comments from leaders, including those who participated in a March 2, 2011 panel discussion hosted by the association and The Weekly Standard, including Reason Foundation’s Robert Poole, Virginia Secretary of Transportation Sean Connaughton, Oklahoma Congressman James Lankford and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Bruce Josten. May 19th – http://www.agc.org/galleries/news/Case-for-Infrastructure-Reform.pdf)

While we clearly would like Congress and the Administration to act on each of the reform recommendations we have provided, what is even more important is that they fundamentally rethink our current and in many ways deeply flawed approach to infrastructure investments. Even if we weren’t on the brink of a new era of federal austerity, the fact is that our federal infrastructure programs have become so convoluted, unfocused and/or ineffective that public support for funding them has declined precipitously. That a nation obsessed with traffic and commuting patterns would chronically resist federal gas tax increases is a clear indication that most Americans no longer believe that the people who built the Interstate system can make it better.

## Obama Bad Links

### Popular in Congress

#### **Bipartisan support for transportation infrastructure spending**

Cooper, 2012 (Donna, Senior Fellow with the Economic Policy team at American Progress. Formerly the deputy mayor for policy for Philadelphia and secretary of policy and planning for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Will Congress Block Infrastructure Spending?, Center for American Progress, http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2012/01/infrastructure\_sotu.html)

At first glance it would appear that the president’s call to invest in infrastructure should enjoy wide bipartisan support. The leadership of both parties in Congress is on record as strong advocates for rebuilding the nation’s roads, bridges, rail, ports, and airports. On Fox News earlier this week, Speaker of the House John Boehner (R-OH) said he wants the president to follow the recommendations of the White House Jobs and Competitiveness Council on increasing federal investments in infrastructure (look for the transcript on the speaker's blog). And Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) is on the record saying, “Everybody knows we have a crumbling infrastructure. Infrastructure spending is popular on both sides. The question is how much are we going to spend.” Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) also strongly support President Obama’s infrastructure plans.

### Popular with public

#### Public favors federal government funding for infrastructure—and thinks its underfunded in the SQ

**Houston Chronicle, 5/18/2012 (“**Americans Value Highways and Bridges as a National Treasure”

[http://www.chron.com/business/press-releases/article/Americans-Value-Highways-and-Bridges-as-a-3568488.php accessed tm 5/19](http://www.chron.com/business/press-releases/article/Americans-Value-Highways-and-Bridges-as-a-3568488.php%20accessed%20tm%205/19) )

Clearly, Americans hold the nation's infrastructure in high regard. Nearly nine in ten (89 percent) Americans feel it’s important for the federal government to fund the maintenance and improvements of interstate highways. Yet, this infrastructure isn’t receiving the fiscal attention it deserves. Congress recently approved the ninth extension of transportation legislation that originally expired in 2009. The [Highway Trust Fund](http://www.chron.com/?controllerName=search&action=search&channel=business%2Fpress-releases&search=1&inlineLink=1&query=%22Highway+Trust+Fund%22) – due to inflation, rising construction costs and increasingly fuel efficient vehicles – no longer collects enough money to support the U.S. surface transportation system, remaining solvent only through a series of infusions from federal general revenue funds. More than half of Americans (57 percent) believe the nation’s infrastructure is underfunded.

#### Bipartisan support for federal investment in infrastructure

**Rockefeller Foundation, 2011(“**Rockefeller Foundation Infrastructure Survey Reveals Bipartisan Support for Transportation and Infrastructure Investments and Reform” press release, Feb 14 2011 [http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/news/press-releases/rockefeller-foundation-infrastructure accessed tm 5/22/12](http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/news/press-releases/rockefeller-foundation-infrastructure%20accessed%20tm%205/22/12))

February 14, 2011 – An exclusive Rockefeller Foundation survey released today reveals overwhelming bipartisan support for federal investment in transportation and infrastructure projects. The survey showed that 71% of voters think leaders in Washington should seek common ground on legislation related to roads, bridges and transit systems, including 66% of Tea Party supporters and 71% of Republicans. Two out of three voters say that improving the country’s transportation infrastructure is highly important. Nearly half of all voters said that roads are often or totally inadequate and that only some public transportation options exist. Eighty percent of voters agree that federal funding to improve and modernize transportation will boost local economies and create millions of jobs, and view it as critical to keeping the United States as the world’s top economic superpower.

#### Support for infrastructure investment outweighs concerns about spending

Halsey, 2012(Ashley Halsey III is a staff writer for The Washington Post, Infrastructure projects need public support, transportation experts say, Washington Post, http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/trafficandcommuting/experts-want-to-build-public-support-for-infrastructure-projects/2012/04/23/gIQAvmMXcT\_story.html)

The plan to energize public support was outlined Monday in a report by transportation experts brought together by the Miller Center at the University of Virginia. After a conference in November, the group concluded that most Americans are aware of the infrastructure crisis and support spending to address it. "Recent public-opinion surveys have found overwhelming support for the idea of infrastructure investment," the report said. "After the 'bridge to nowhere' controversies of recent years, the public has become sensitized to issues of pork-barrel spending and understandably demands to see a clear connection between federal expenditures, actual transportation needs, and economic benefits." Despite apprehension about wasteful spending, the report said, more than two-thirds of voters surveyed by the Rockefeller Foundation said infrastructure improvement was important and 80 percent said spending on it would create millions of jobs. The transportation group, co-chaired by former transportation secretaries Norman Y. Mineta and Samuel K. Skinner, compiled a comprehensive study on infrastructure in 2010. That report estimated that an additional $134 billion to $262 billion must be spent per year through 2035 to rebuild and improve roads, rail systems and air transportation.

# **Railroads Links**

## **Obama Good**

### Generic Railroads Unpopular with public

#### **Low satisfaction ratings prove, public against rails**

Radnedge, 2012 (Aidan, Chief reporter for Metro News, High fares for poor service, say unsatisfied rail users, Metro News, http://www.metro.co.uk/news/888570-high-fares-for-poor-service-say-unsatisfied-rail-users)

Commuter satisfaction with the most unpopular train operators has slumped to just 27 per cent, a major survey shows. Poor value for money is the top complaint – weeks after some fares were increased by 11 per cent. Ratings for punctuality and reliability also worsened. Office of Rail Regulation chairwoman Anna Walker said: ‘The rail industry must work harder to give passengers the service they deserve.’ First Capital Connect, National Express and London Midland were among the companies attracting the most moans in the report by watchdog group Passenger Focus. Passenger Focus chief executive Anthony Smith said services ranged only from ‘mediocre to good’. He added: ‘Satisfaction with value for money has gone down, illustrating the impact tough economic times coupled with fare rises are having.’

### **Generic Railroads Unpopular in Congress**

#### Mass transit – buses and trains – are received with political battles in congress

Wronski, 2012 (Richard, Chicago Tribune, 2/15/12, “Mass transit fund debate splits GOP Congress members,” http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2012-02-15/news/ct-met-congress-transit-funding-20120214\_1\_mass-transit-transportation-bill-highway-trust-fund/2)

A largely partisan clash in Washington over federal funding for mass transit could jeopardize up to $450 million a year for Chicago-area bus and train projects, transportation officials said Monday. The funding debate also has caused a rift in the ranks of area Republican members of Congress, who find themselves torn between loyalty to GOP leaders in Washington and pressure from Chicago transit agencies.

### HSR unpopular in Congress

#### **HSR drains Obama’s political capital**

Freemark, 2011 (Yonah, Master of Science in Transportation from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology;. Also a freelance journalist who has been published in Planning Magazine; Next American City Magazine; Dissent; The Atlantic Cities; Next American City Online; and The Infrastructurist – He created and continues to write for the website The Transport Politic – The Transport Politic – February 8th, 2011 – http://www.thetransportpolitic.com/2011/02/08/the-white-house-stakes-its-political-capital-on-a-massive-intercity-rail-plan/)

The White House Stakes Its Political Capital on a Massive Intercity Rail Plan $53 billion proposed for investments over the next six years. The President wants to “Win the Future,” but will his Republican opponents relax their opposition to rail spending? Vice President Joe Biden spoke in Philadelphia this morning to announce that the Obama Administration intends to request from Congress $8 billion in federal funds for the advancement of a national high-speed rail system as part of a six-year transportation reauthorization bill. The White House’s commitment to fast trains has been evident throughout the Administration’s two-year lifespan, beginning with the addition of $8 billion for the mode in the 2009 stimulus bill and continued with $2.5 billion included in the Fiscal Year 2010 budget. Yet this new funding, which would add up to $53 billion over the six-year period, is remarkable for its ambition. It is clear that President Obama’s 2012 re-election campaign, already being framed in terms of “winning the future,” will hinge partially on whether voters agree with his assessment of the importance of investing in the nation’s rail transport infrastructure. In his speech, Mr. Biden argued that American wealth was founded on “out-building” the competition. Infrastructure, he noted, is the “veins and the arteries of commerce.” The President and his team will be making this case to the American people the next two years, hoping that the public comes to endorse this message of national advancement through construction. Whether the proposal — to be laid out in more detail with next week’s introduction the President’s full proposed FY 2012 budget — has any chance of success is undoubtedly worth questioning. Republicans have campaigned wholeheartedly against rail improvement projects in Iowa, Ohio, and Wisconsin; even Florida’s project, which would require no operating subsidies once in service, hangs in the balance. But as part of the larger transportation reauthorization legislation, which is apparently slated to move forward by this summer, a real expansion in high-speed rail funding seems possible, especially if Mr. Obama pressures the Democratic-controlled Senate to push hard for it.

#### **GOP completely against HSR**

Freemark, 2012 (Yonah,– Master of Science in Transportation from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Also a freelance journalist who has been published in Planning Magazine; Next American City Magazine; Dissent; The Atlantic Cities; Next American City Online; and The Infrastructurist – He created and continues to write for the website The Transport Politic – The Transport Politic February 6th, 2012 – http://www.thetransportpolitic.com/2012/02/06/time-to-fight/)

With a House like this, what advances can American transportation policy make? Actions by members of the U.S. House over the past week suggest that Republican opposition to the funding of alternative transportation has developed into an all-out ideological battle. Though their efforts are unlikely to advance much past the doors of their chamber, the policy recklessness they have displayed speaks truly poorly of the future of the nation’s mobility systems. By Friday last week, the following measures were brought to the attention of the GOP-led body: The Ways and Means Committee acted to eliminate the Mass Transit Account of the Highway Trust Fund, destroying public transportation’s source of steady federal financing for capital projects, first established in the 1980s. The members of the committee determined that to remedy the fact that gas taxes have not been increased since 1993,\* the most appropriate course was not to raise the tax (as would make sense considering inflation, more efficient vehicles, and the negative environmental and congestion-related effects of gas consumption) but rather to transfer all of its revenues to the construction of highways. Public transit, on the other hand, would have to fight for an appropriation from the general fund, losing its traditional guarantee of funding and forcing any spending on it to be offset by reductions in other government programs.\*\* This as the GOP has made evident its intention to reduce funding for that same general fund through a continued push for income tax reductions, even for the highest earners. The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved a transportation reauthorization bill on partisan lines (with the exception of one Republican who voted against it, Tom Petri of Wisconsin) that would do nothing to increase funding for transportation infrastructure in the United States over the next five years despite the fact that there is considerable demand for a large improvement in the nation’s road, rail, and transit networks just to keep them in a state of good repair, let alone expand them to meet the needs of a growing population. The committee voted to eliminate all federal requirements that states and localities spend 10% of their highway funding on alternative transportation projects (CMAQ), such as Safe Routes to School, sidewalks, or cycling infrastructure, despite the fact the those mandated investments are often the only ones of their sort that are actually made by many states. The committee eliminated the Obama Administration’s trademark TIGER program, which has funded dozens of medium-scale projects throughout the country with a innovative merit-based approach. Instead, virtually all decisions on project funding would be made by state DOTs, which not unjustly have acquired a reputation as only interested in highways. Meanwhile, members couldn’t resist suggesting that only “true” high-speed rail projects (over 150 mph top speed) be financed by the government — even as they conveniently defunded the only such scheme in the country, the California High-Speed Rail program. The same committee added provisions to federal law that would provide special incentives for privatization of new transportation projects — despite the fact that there is no overwhelming evidence that such mechanisms save the public any money at all. And under the committee’s legislation, the government would provide extra money to localities that contract out their transit services to private operators, simply as a reward for being profit-motivated. Meanwhile, House leadership recommended funding any gaps in highway spending not covered by the Trust Fund through a massive expansion in domestic energy production that would destroy thousands of acres of pristine wilderness, do little for decreasing the American reliance on foreign oil, and reaffirm the nation’s addiction to carbon-heavy energy sources and ecological devastation. New energy production of this sort is highly speculative in nature and would produce very few revenues in the first years of implementation. As a special treat, the same leadership proposed overruling President Obama’s decision to cancel the Keystone XL pipeline by bundling an approval for it into the transportation bill. This litany of disastrous policies were endorsed by the large majority of Republicans on each committee, with the exception of two GOP members in House Ways and Means\*\*\* and one in the Transportation Committee who voted against the bill, though the vote was entirely along party lines for an amendment attempting to reverse course on the elimination of the Mass Transit Account. Fortunately, these ideas are unlikely to make it into the code thanks to the Senate, whose members, both Democratic and Republican, have different ideas about what makes an acceptable transportation bill. I’ll get back to that in a bit. The House’s effort to move forward on a new multiyear federal transportation bill — eagerly awaited by policy wonks for three years — follows intense and repeated Republican obstructions of the Obama Administration’s most pioneering efforts to alter the nation’s transportation policy in favor of investments that improve daily life for inhabitants of American metropolitan areas. As part of that process, federally funded high-speed rail, streetcar, and transit center projects have been shot down by local politicians as a waste of money, even as road construction has continued apace. The Tea Party’s zany obsession with the supposed U.N. plot to take over American land use decisions through Agenda 21 seems to have infected GOP House members and even presidential contenders. Michele Bachmann’s claim in 2008 that Democrats are attempting to force people onto light rail lines to travel between their housing “tenements” and government jobs may have made it into the mind of Newt Gingrich, who recently made the claim that the “elite” in New York City who ride the subway and live in high-rise condos don’t understand “normal” Americans. What kind of language is this? In the Senate, there is clear evidence that the hard-core proposals of the House will not become law. The upper body’s Environment and Public Works Committee unanimously endorsed a different type of transportation reauthorization, one that would last only two years but that would reform and simplify the grants provided by the Department of Transportation so that they are more based on merit in such matters as ecological sensitivity and the creation of livable communities. Similarly, in the Senate Banking Committee, the transit portion of the proposed bill (approved unanimously) would maintain funding guarantees and allow transit agencies to use federal dollars for operations spending during periods of high unemployment, which would be an excellent policy if pushed into law. How the Senate will be able to compromise with the House in time for the March 31st deadline set by the current legislation is up in the air. The strange and laudable part of the Senate side of the story — at least as compared to the House — is the bipartisan nature of decision-making there. Why are Republicans in the Senate promoting a transportation bill that explicitly would promote multimodalism as a goal, in a contrast to the highway focus of their peers in the House? Why are they accepting environmental criteria as appropriate measures of quality in transportation policy? Perhaps the Democratic Party’s control of the Senate makes fighting such ideas a waste of time. Or perhaps longer Senate terms in office allow clearer, more reasonable thinking. Whatever the reason, in the long-term, it is hard to envision reversing the continued growth of the GOP’s strident opposition to sustainable transportation investments in the House. As I have documented, density of population correlates strongly and positively with the Democratic Party vote share in Congressional elections; the result has been that the House Republicans have few electoral reasons to articulate policies that benefit cities. Those who believe in the importance of a sane transportation policy need to make more of an effort to advance a sane transportation politics to residents of suburban and rural areas, who also benefit from efforts to improve environmental quality, mobility alternatives, and congestion relief, but perhaps are not yet convinced of that fact. Doing so would encourage politicians hoping for votes outside of the city core — Democratic or Republican — to promote alternatives to the all-highways meme that currently rules the GOP in the House.

#### GOP against all infrastructure spending, specifically public transit

Freemark, 2011 (Yonah, Master of Science in Transportation from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Also a freelance journalist who has been published in Planning Magazine; Next American City Magazine; Dissent; The Atlantic Cities; Next American City Online; and The Infrastructurist – He created and continues to write for the website The Transport Politic – The Transport Politic – “Understanding the Republican Party’s Reluctance to Invest in Transit Infrastructure”

January 25th, 2011 – http://www.thetransportpolitic.com/2011/01/25/understanding-the-republican-partys-reluctance-to-invest-in-transit-infrastructure/)

Conservatives in Congress threaten to shut down funding for transit construction projects and investments in intercity rail. One doesn’t have to look far to see why these programs aren’t priorities for them. Late last week, a group of more than 165 of the most conservative members of the House of Representatives, the Republican Study Committee, released a report that detailed an agenda to reduce federal spending by $2.5 trillion over ten years. Spurred on by increasing public concern about the mounting national debt, the group argues that the only choice is to make huge, painful cuts in government programs. With the House now in the hands of the Republican Party, these suggestions are likely to be seriously considered. Transportation policy is prominent on the group’s list, no matter President Obama’s call for investments in the nation’s transportation infrastructure, expected to be put forward in tonight’s state of the union address. Not only would all funding for Amtrak be cut, representing about $1.5 billion a year, but the Obama Administration’s nascent high-speed rail program would be stopped in its tracks. A $150 million commitment to Washington’s Metro system would evaporate. Even more dramatically, the New Starts program, which funds new rail and bus capital projects at a cost of $2 billion a year, would simply disappear. In other words, the Republican group suggests that all national government aid for the construction of new rail or bus lines, intercity and intra-city, be eliminated. These cuts are extreme, and they’re not likely to make it to the President’s desk, not only because of the Democratic Party’s continued control over the Senate but also because some powerful Republicans in the House remain committed to supporting public transportation and rail programs. But how can we explain the open hostility of so many members of the GOP to any federal spending at all for non-automobile transportation? Why does a transfer of power from the Democratic Party to the Republicans engender such political problems for urban transit? We can find clues in considering the districts from which members of the House of Representatives of each party are elected. As shown in the chart above (in Log scale), there was a relatively strong positive correlation between density of congressional districts and the vote share of the Democratic candidate in the 2010 elections. Of densest quartile of districts with a race between a Democrat and a Republican — 105 of them, with a density of 1,935 people per square miles or more — the Democratic candidate won 89. Of the quartile of districts with the lowest densities — 98 people per square mile and below — Democratic candidates only won 23 races. As the chart below demonstrates (in regular scale), this pattern is most obvious in the nation’s big cities, where Democratic Party vote shares are huge when densities are very high. This pattern is not a coincidence. The Democratic Party holds most of its power in the nation’s cities, whereas the GOP retains greater strength in the exurbs and rural areas. The two parties generally fight it out over the suburbs. In essence, the base of the two parties is becoming increasingly split in spatial terms: The Democrats’ most vocal constituents live in cities, whereas the Republicans’ power brokers would never agree to what some frame as a nightmare of tenements and light rail. What does this mean? When there is a change in political power in Washington, the differences on transportation policy and other urban issues between the parties reveal themselves as very stark. Republicans in the House of Representatives know that very few of their constituents would benefit directly from increased spending on transit, for instance, so they propose gutting the nation’s commitment to new public transportation lines when they enter office. Starting two years ago, Democrats pushed the opposite agenda, devoting billions to urban-level projects that would have been impossible under the Bush Administration. Highway funding, on the other hand, has remained relatively stable throughout, and that’s no surprise, either: The middle 50% of congressional districts, representing about half of the American population, features populations that live in neighborhoods of low to moderate densities, fully reliant on cars to get around. It is only in the densest sections of the country that transit (or affordable housing, for instance) is even an issue — which is why it appears to be mostly of concern to the Democratic Party. Republicans in the House for the most part do not have to answer to voters who are interested in improved public transportation. This situation, of course, should be of significant concern to those who would advocate for better transit. To put matters simply, few House Republicans have any electoral reason to promote such projects, and thus, for the most part they don’t. But that produces a self-reinforcing loop; noting the lack of GOP support for urban needs, city voters push further towards the Democrats. And sensing that the Democratic Party is a collection of urbanites, those from elsewhere push away. It’s hard to know how to reverse this problem. Many Republicans, of course, represent urban areas at various levels of government. No Democrat, for instance, has won the race for New York’s mayoralty since 1989. And the Senate is a wholly different ballgame, since most states have a variety of habitation types. As Bruce McFarling wrote this week, there are plenty of reasons for Republicans even in places of moderate density to support such investments as intercity rail. But the peculiar dynamics of U.S. House members’ relatively small constituent groups, in combination with the predilection of state legislatures to produce gerrymandered districts designed specifically to ensure the reelection of incumbents, has resulted in a situation in which there is only one Republican-controlled congressional district with a population density of over 7,000 people per square mile. And that’s in Staten Island, hardly a bastion of urbanism. With such little representation for urban issues in today’s House leadership, real advances on transport issues seem likely to have to wait.

#### GOP against high speed rail proposals

**Spinelli, 6/11/2012**(John M., communication professional and former credentialed Ohio statehouse journalist, writer for the Examiner, Obama, Walker, Kasich on different tracks as CA voters derail bullet train plan, http://www.examiner.com/article/obama-walker-kasich-on-different-tracks-as-ca-voters-derail-bullet-train-plan)

In the 2010 races, when Tea Party governors like Walker in Wisconsin and Kasich in Ohio railed against their opponent's plans to build high-speed rail projects because they wanted to cut, not increase, government spending, the HSR proposal by Mr. Obama was a bold if not controversial step forward. When the White House awarded states with slices of the HSR pie in 2009, which were sold to the public as guaranteed job creators that would produce trains that would zip riders from one major metropolitan area to another at speeds only seen in Europe, Japan or China, Wisconsin placed 3rd with $800 million and Ohio 4th with $400 million behind California and Florida, numbers one and two. Gov. **Walker**, who beat his Democratic opponent last Tuesday by about 7 points after having out spent his Milwaukee mayor rival by 8 to 1, **and** John **Kasich**, who won by only 2 percentage points in 2010, **promised to derail their respective state's plans for high-speed if elected. They were, and they did.**

## Obama Bad

### HSR popular in Congress

#### High speed rail popular with GOP and Dems in Congress

**Hart**, **5/23/2012** (Thomas, director of government relations at Quarles & Brady, and vice president of government affairs for the US High Speed Rail Association, Politico, <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0512/76682.html> accessed tm)

**Even as Congress looks into a new surface transportation bill, U.S. transportation systems confront daunting challenges of overcrowding and disrepair. Delays and waste cost the nation more than $100 billion per year in lost time, productivity and energy.** The U.S. needs modern public transportation not dependent on oil or traffic patterns. Most developed nations now have high-speed rail, sleek trains that reach more than 200 mph. Here, this option would be most viable in two distinct corridors on the East and West Coasts – the Northeast Corridor, from Boston to Washington, and California. The Northeast Corridor is already one of most valuable U.S. transportation assets. With I-95, it’s the only continuous link between the major population centers of Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and Boston. This is the nation’s most densely populated region with 18 percent of the U.S. population living in just 2 percent of its land area. The NEC region alone would be the world’s sixth-largest economy, with a gross domestic product of $2.59 trillion. The NEC is already a mature rail corridor — Amtrak and regional rail services show ridership spikes whenever gas prices increase. Amtrak’s Acela service, however, averages only 80 mph. True high-speed rail in this corridor could prove competitive with air travel, particularly because rail can easily connect to other local and regional transit networks. There is growing consensus among Democrats and Republicans in Congress that the NEC is ideally suited for high-speed rail development. Differences remain, however, on the best path for development.

# Infrastructure Bank Links

## **Obama Good**

### Unpopular in Congress

#### **Infrastructure bank unpopular among house republicans**

Johnson, 2011 (Fawn, correspondent for National Journal, covering a range of issues including immigration, transportation and education, Is There Hope for an Infrastructure Bank?, http://transportation.nationaljournal.com/2011/02/is-there-hope-for-an-infrastru.php#168414)

Obama sees infrastructure investment as the key to job growth and economic competitiveness. The infrastructure bank would ensure success on large transportation projects because the administration would select only the best ideas for federal funding, in the White House view. Skeptics in Congress have balked at an infrastructure bank, worrying that it would face the same problems as the politically unpopular Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. House Republicans are unlikely to give the Transportation Department the funding to make an infrastructure bank work as Obama would like.

#### GOP against infrastructure bank

**Mitchell, 2011** (Josh, staff reporter for the Wall Street Journal, Plan for Highway Bank Faces Uphill Battle, http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111904823804576500692477795126.html)

President Barack Obama is pressing Congress to create a new "infrastructure bank" to finance highway and rail construction, create jobs and jump-start the stalled economy, but the proposal faces hurdles on Capitol Hill. White House officials have described the bank as a new government entity that would make loans to support public-works projects of regional and national significance with private funding. That includes interstate highways, rail lines linking Midwest farmers to West Coast ports, and equipment for planes to link up to a new satellite-based air-traffic-control network. By luring more private capital to infrastructure projects with low-interest loans, the bank is designed to provide a long-term solution to more immediate problems. The law authorizing the gasoline tax that provides the bulk of federal transportation money expires Sept. 30, and the tax, currently at 18.4 cents a gallon, isn't generating enough funds to keep pace with the nation's infrastructure needs anyway. But the White House, House Republicans and some Senate Democrats differ on the best way to encourage more private investment in public infrastructure. Those disagreements are likely to be swept into a broader debate over how to shrink the federal deficit that could stretch to the November 2012 elections. Some lawmakers fear that once they return from their August recess, a political fight over spending could delay reauthorization of the law for weeks or even months. The government would lose up to $100 million a day in gas-tax revenue, payments to states would be halted and construction jobs would likely be lost if the law lapses, business groups warn. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and others say they support the idea of an infrastructure bank but worry that the administration is giving short shrift to the more urgent problem. "They have not focused on the need to pass a highway and transit bill," said Janet Kavinoky, the Chamber's chief lobbyist on transportation policy, noting that several years could pass before large-scale projects supported by the bank would get under construction. "We are very frustrated that they continue to hold out the bank as a substitute for doing a highway and transit bill." A White House official said the administration has been in touch regularly with members of Congress to push for both a highway bill and a national infrastructure bank. The official said "no one is taking this for granted," referring to passage of the highway bill, and added that when the president talks about an infrastructure bank, he is referring to his long-term vision of how to reform transportation policies. In a time of dwindling public resources, said Jason Furman of the White House economic council, "you want to stretch the dollars you do have farther." Under the White House plan, the infrastructure bank would augment current highway and transit programs. The bank would receive $30 billion over six years and would issue grants, loans and other financial tools. The president's budget proposal in February suggested the bank reside in the Transportation Department and be controlled by an executive director and board of officials from various federal agencies. Projects would need to meet "rigorous" criteria to ensure they benefit the maximum number of people, preventing more "bridges to nowhere." Some Republicans say that such a bank would simply add a new bureaucracy in Washington and shift decision-making from Congress to the executive branch. "How this project would be funded, what it would fund and how those funds would be repaid are critical questions the Obama administration has not answered yet," said Kevin Smith, a spokesman for House Speaker John Boehner (R., Ohio). "If this is more of the same 'stimulus' spending, we won't support it."

#### Republicans against Infrastructure Bank

Laing, 2011(Keith, The Hill staff writer, Mica opposes Obama’s call for national infrastructure bank , <http://thehill.com/blogs/transportation-report/highways-bridges-and-roads/180481-gop-chairman-opposes-obamas-call-for-national-infrastructure-bank>,)

The Republican chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee said Thursday evening that he is opposed to the call for a national infrastructure bank President Obama made in his speech to a joint session of Congress. Rep. John Mica (Fla.) said he thought Congress should encourage individual states to create their own infrastructure banks, arguing as he has in the past that it would give them more flexibility to design transportation projects that fit their own needs. “While the President reconfirmed that our highways are clogged and our skies are congested, his well delivered address provided only one specific recommendation for building our nation’s infrastructure,” Mica said in a news release. “Unfortunately, a National Infrastructure Bank run by Washington bureaucrats requiring Washington approval and Washington red tape is moving in the wrong direction. A better plan to improve infrastructure is to empower our states, 33 of which already have state infrastructure banks.” Obama called Thursday for Congress to approve a proposal for a federal infrastructure bank that has been pushed for by Sens. John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-Texas). “We’ll set up an independent fund to attract private dollars and issue loans based on two criteria: how badly a construction project is needed and how much good it would do for the economy,” Obama said.

#### Misinformation has made infrastructure banks incredibly unpopular in Congress

Thomasson ’11 (Scott, Economic and Domestic Policy Director at Center Forward, no date given however the proposal for the bank in question took place in 2011, Progressive Policy Institute, http://www.center-forward.org/2012/02/20/progressive-policy-institute/)

There is no better symbol of the current dysfunction of our political system than the partisan divide on funding infrastructure programs. Congress has been unable to find common ground on critical transportation funding bills that expired years ago. And the compulsive knee-jerk reactions from Republicans to every proposal President Obama offers for infrastructure spending renders many good ideas nearly dead on arrival in Congress, simply because he was the one to suggest them. The most recent proposal to fall victim to reactive partisan thinking is the president’s proposal in the American Jobs Act for a national infrastructure bank type of entity, known as the American Infrastructure Financing Authority, or “AIFA.” The AIFA proposal has been the target of a huge misinformation campaign that consistently paints a very misleading picture of what the “bank” would look like and how it would finance infrastructure projects.

#### Republicans won’t let an infrastructure bank pass without a fight

Shesgreen ’11 (Deirdre, Washington correspondent. Two-time winner of the David Lynch Memorial Reporting Award for regional coverage of Congress. She is a graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Missouri-Columbia, 9/20/11, “With federal funds threatened, state looks for new ways to pay for transit,” http://ctmirror.com/story/13953/stateinfrabank)

WASHINGTON--Gov. Dannel P. Malloy has asked his top transportation advisers to look at creative financing mechanisms, including setting up a state infrastructure bank, to fund critical highway and transit projects. The move comes as Malloy and other governors brace for an anticipated drop in federal transportation dollars. It also comes as Congress gears up for a partisan clash over such infrastructure banks, which seek to use public funds to leverage private investment for high-priority, big-ticket projects. President Barack Obama and other Democrats, including Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-3rd District, have called for a generously-funded national bank to finance major infrastructure initiatives. But congressional Republicans have balked at the idea, saying it smacks of a second wasteful stimulus proposal.

# **Space Travel Links**

## Obama Good

### Space Unpopular with Congress

#### Space operations unpopular due to budget and debt

Schmitt, 2011 (Harrison, former US Senator New Mexico, former Apollo Astronaut, aerospace and private enterprise consultant, member of the new Committee of Correspondence, 5/24/11, “Former Senator Schmitt Proposes Dismantling of NASA and Creation of a New, Deep Space Exploration Agency”, http://aerospaceblog.wordpress.com/2011/05/24/former-senator-schmitt-proposes-dismantling-of-nasa-and-creation-of-a-new-deep-space-exploration-agency)

How notions of leadership have changed since Eisenhower and Kennedy! Immense difficulties now have been imposed on the Nation and NASA by the budgetary actions and inactions of the Bush and Obama Administrations between 2004 and 2012. Space policy gains relevance today comparable to 50 years ago as the dangers created by the absence of a coherent national space policy have been exacerbated by subsequent adverse events. Foremost among these events have been the Obama Administration’s and the Congress’s spending and debt spree, the continued aggressive rise of China, and, with the exception of operations of the Space Shuttle and International Space Station, the loss of focus and leadership within NASA headquarters.

#### Major Republicans against human space flight

Daily Kos, 2011 (Daily Kos, Science Matters, 6/14/11, “GOP Debate: No federal funding for human spaceflight”, ” http://www.dailykos.com/story/2011/06/14/985053/-GOP-Debate:-No-Federal-funding-for-human-space-flight)

The Republican presidential field sent a clear message to NASA workers in America: They don’t see a federal role in funding human space flight, [video clip at 6:50 to 9:28|AF]. Debate moderator John King of CNN asked the other six candidates in attendance whether they would continue federal funding for human space flight. Not a single candidate - Texas Rep. Ron Paul, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty, Minnesota Rep. Michele Bachmann, former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum and former Godfather’s Pizza CEO Herman Cain — raised their hand.

#### Space funding controversial- questionable benefits

Cunningham, 10**,** (Walter Cunningham, Former Apollo Astronaut, Reporter, Houston Chronicle, 2/6/10, “Slashed NASA budget would leave the US no longer a Space Leader”, http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/editorial/outlook/6854790.html)

NASA has always been a political football. The agency's lifeblood is federal funding, and it has been losing blood for several decades. The only hope now for a lifesaving transfusion to stop the hemorrhaging is Congress. It is hard to be optimistic. President Obama has apparently decided the United States should not be in the human spaceflight business. He obviously thinks NASA's historic mission is a waste of time and money. Until just two months before his election, he was proposing to use the $18 billion NASA budget as a piggybank to fund his favored education programs. With this budget proposal, he is taking a step in that direction. NASA is not just a place to spend money, or to count jobs. It is the agency that has given us a better understanding of our present and hope for our future; an agency that gives us something to inspire us, especially young people. NASA's Constellation program was not “over budget, behind schedule, and lacking in innovation due to a failure to invest in critical new technologies,” as stated in the White House budget plan. The program's problems were due to perennial budget deficiencies. It would have been sustainable for an annual increase equal to the amount thrown away on the “cash for clunkers” program, or just a fraction of the tens of billions of dollars expended annually on congressional earmarks. It's debatable whether Constellation was the best solution to President George W. Bush's vision of “Moon, Mars and Beyond,” but it was far better than the vacuum in which we now find ourselves, and without a viable alternative in sight.

#### Expanding space exploration is perceived as controversial new spending -- guarantees backlash

Handberg 2001 (Professor and Chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Central Florida (Rodger, “Small ball or home runs: the changing ethos of US human spaceflight policy,” The Space Review, 1/17, <http://www.thespacereview.com/article/1759/1>)

The US space program remained focused, not on duplicating Apollo, but on achieving another difficult goal such as going to Mars, a logical extension truly of the Apollo effort. Twice, the presidents Bush provided the presidential rationale, if not support, for achieving great things. The Space Exploration Initiative (SEI) in 1989 and the Vision for Space Exploration (VSE) in 2004 were announced with great fanfare but neither survived the realities of congressional and presidential budgeting. The VSE appeared on paper more realistic about funding, but its choices were draconian: the ISS and space shuttle were both to be sacrificed on the altar of the new program. The earlier SEI died quickly, so hard choices were not required, while the VSE in the form of the Constellation Program lingers on although its effective demise appears certain. The Obama Administration prefers another approach while the new Congress is likely more hostile to big ticket discretionary spending. If the Tea Party faction in the Republican House caucus means what it says, the future for Constellation or any other similar program is a dim one. The reality is that the Apollo program, the SEI, and the VSE are examples in space terms of the home run approach. Such efforts confront the cruel but obvious reality that the human spaceflight program is considered by the public and most of Congress to be a “nice to have,” but not a necessity when compared to other programs or national priorities. Congressional support is narrow and constituency-driven (i.e. protect local jobs), which means most in Congress only support the space program in the abstract. Big ticket items or programs are not a priority for most, given other priorities. What happens is what can be loosely termed normal politics: a situation where human spaceflight remains a low priority on the national agenda. Funding for bold new initiatives is going to be hard to come by even when the economy recovers and deficits are under control. The home run approach has run its course at least for a time; now the small ball approach becomes your mantra.

# **Airways/Airports Links**

## **Obama Good**

### Unpopular in Congress

#### **Airport Improvement is politically unpopular**

**Schank, 5/31** (Joshua, President and CEO of the Eno Center for Transportation a neutral, non-partisan think-tank, The Federal Role in Transportation: Four Ideas for Greater Federal Involvement, http://www.enotrans.org/eno-brief/the-federal-role-in-transportation-four-ideas-for-greater-federal-involvement)

Airports face substantial challenges in trying to tackle this issue on their own. The most widely recommended solution is pricing airport runways by time of day. But this politically unpopular solution has faced substantial opposition from communities such as smaller cities flying into hubs, or general aviation aircraft that are concerned about being effectively priced out of the market for a given airport. Congested airports would have a much greater chance of success if they were trying to tackle congestion in partnership with the federal government and other local transportation agencies. The federal role could be improved by dedicating a portion of the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) to provide grants to airports in regions that have a plan to work collaboratively to reduce congestion and overcome some of the political barriers to more effective pricing. Or the AIP could be retooled to set specific performance goals for airports and rewarding achievement. However it is done, there is a clear national interest at play here and the federal government needs to be more involved.

#### Airport funding unpopular and cause political infighting to get passage – recent bill proves

**Barrett, 2012** (Ted, Senior Congressional Producer, After much delay, Senate clears FAA bill, <http://articles.cnn.com/2012-02-06/travel/travel_faa-funding_1_faa-funding-measure-senate-committee?_s=PM:TRAVEL>, JD)

After passing 23 temporary extensions, the Senate voted 75 to 20 Monday to approve a long-term funding bill for the FAA and sent it to the president for his expected signature. The measure provides about $16 billion a year for FAA operations, airport construction and modernization. It includes safety measures, such as a new satellite-based system for air traffic control, as well as other aviation programs, like one that subsidizes air travel to rural areas. Negotiations over the bill repeatedly stalled over contentious labor issues that congressional leaders finally compromised on in January. Last summer, airport construction projects were halted abruptly when funding temporarily lapsed after Congress couldn't agree on a new extension. "Compromises in the current atmosphere are not easy," said Sen. Jay Rockefeller, D-West Virginia, who chairs the senate committee that handled the measure. "This has been a long process," agreed Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison of Texas, the top Republican on the committee. Hutchison said she was pleased to get a four-year funding measure finalized because it will provide stability to the industry. "Now our airports are going to be able to start their building projects. They're going to be able to increase their runway space or repair whatever their priorities are that are decided by the FAA," she said. The House approved the bill Friday.

#### Congress is deadlocked when it comes to airport funding – guarantees a political battle

Wollack, 2011 (Leslie, National League of Cities, 8/1/11, “Congressional Impasse on Airport Legislation Continues,” http://www.nlc.org/news-center/nations-cities-weekly/articles/2011/august/congressional-impasse-on-airport-legislation-continues)

Congress will need to resolve the underlying issues around collective bargaining and subsidies to small airports that would otherwise not have commercial air services when they return after the August recess. The stopgap measure will allow the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to operate through Sept. 16. As the Congressional impasse over an extension of federal airport legislation continues, funds for current and future municipal airport improvements cannot be distributed by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and current revenues are going to the airlines rather than the Airport Trust Fund for the future. Construction funds for municipal airports across the country have been held up by the FAA, due to the shutdown of the government program for the first time in its history. The House and Senate have been unable to reach agreement on another extension of federal aviation programs, which expired on July 22. Congress has passed 19 extensions since September 2009, when the initial legislation expired.

#### **Too many differences means that airport funding has resistance in Congress**

Washington Post 2011 (7/26/11, “FAA falls victim to Congress’s partisan politics,” http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/faa-falls-victim-to-congresss-partisan-politics/2011/07/26/gIQAxLPYbI\_story.html)

CHALK UP ANOTHER victim of partisan politics in Congress: the Federal Aviation Administration. The agency’s last long-term authorization lapsed four years ago. Earlier this year, the Republican-majority House and Democratic-majority Senate each passed new long-term bills to replace a series of short-term funding extensions that kept the agency operating in the interim. But they have been unable to resolve major differences between the two bills, and the last extension expired on Friday. Consequently, the FAA has had to furlough thousands of employees around the country and suspend airport modernization projects worth $2.5 billion.

# Highways Links

## Obama Good

### Unpopular in Congress

#### Highway bill unpopular, bogged down by Keystone

**Laing, 2012** (Keith, The Hill staff reporter, “Insiders pessimistic about highway bill talks”, 5/7/12, <http://thehill.com/business-a-lobbying/225927-pessimism-for-highway-talks>, JD)

The committee of lawmakers appointed to negotiate a new federal highway bill will meet for the first time Tuesday, beginning their talks amid low expectations for a deal in a charged election-year environment. Many observers, including Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, have expressed doubt that Congress will pass a multiyear bill before the November election. But leaders of the 47-member panel from both House and Senate say they have a blueprint — hewing closely to their respective chamber’s approach — for the talks to defy the seemingly long odds. “For the conference to be successful, it must include significant transportation program reforms and ensure that needed jobs will be created,” a spokesman for House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman John Mica (R-Fla.) said in a statement provided to The Hill on Monday. “Now is the time to set aside our personal wish lists and focus on the issue at hand — the reauthorization of a bill that is absolutely essential to our economy,” Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) agreed in a statement after conferees were first announced last month. “Controversy should not be part of the conference, and we should come together for the good of the country.” Boxer shepherded a two-year, $109 billion transportation bill through the Senate earlier this year. Mica tried to do the same in the House with a five-year, $260 billion version of the bill, but was ultimately unsuccessful. Members of the lawmakers’ respective committees will now begin negotiations based on the Senate transportation bill and a pair of House-passed short-term extensions of current law that kept funds flowing to road and transit projects. The talks are likely to center, at least at the outset, on a controversial cross-country pipeline that has emerged as an anti-Obama rallying cry for Republicans. The House version of the transportation and infrastructure bill approves the Keystone XL pipeline to bring Canadian oil sands to Gulf Coast refineries. The Senate’s plan omits the Keystone provision, and Democrats have decried its inclusion in the highway negotiations. White House press secretary Jay Carney has called the Keystone pipeline provision “noxious” to the highway negotiations. “What Congress is asking — in this highly politicized, highly partisan way, attaching a provision on the Keystone pipeline to a piece of legislation that has nothing to do with it ... in advance, blind, approve a pipeline, a proposal for which does not exist — but we’ll approve it anyway — a foreign pipeline built by a foreign company emanating from foreign territory to cross U.S. borders,” Carney said in a White House press briefing last month. A group of business leaders pressed lawmakers Monday to make sure the Keystone approval stays in the final highway bill, should one emerge from the conference committee. “As you commence your work on maintaining vital American transportation investments, Business Roundtable urges you to vote ‘Yes’ on the provision included in the House-passed version of the transportation bill that would expedite approval of the Keystone XL pipeline extension,” said the letter from the Business Roundtable. Even without the Keystone dramatics, transportation supporters say, the stakes for the congressional talks are high. “As House and Senate conferees begin negotiations on surface transportation legislation tomorrow, nearly 2 million current jobs, and up to 1 million new jobs, are at stake in what remains a slow economic recovery,” AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department President Ed Wytkind said in a statement released Monday. “More stonewalling will not help families pay mortgages, college tuition or healthcare bills,” Wytkind continued. “Members of Congress have a choice to make. They can make a deal based upon the bipartisan Senate bill (MAP-21), or they can force a debate on controversial provisions — such as privatization giveaways to foreign interests — in the House bill (H.R. 7) that never even made it to the floor for a vote.”

#### **Long term highway bill unpopular**

Franklin, 4/5/2012 (Steven, writer for Z6 Mag and the Eno Center for Transportation, Highway Bill Passage In Doubt Until After Election, http://z6mag.com/business/highway-bill-passage-in-doubt-until-after-election-167418.html)

Congress has dashed any hopes of the passage of a long-termhighway bill before the elections. The passage of another short-term funding extension has advocates of a federal highway bill feeling like they may have come to the end of the road figuratively and perhaps literally. President Obama signed the temporary measure that will onlyfund highway projects through June 30. There were hopes by those in the transportation industry that a multi-year bill would have been passed by the House that would be similar to the measure that passed in the Senate 74-22. Transportation advocates such as President Edward Wytkind of the AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department (TTD) are doubtful that Congress will pass the long-term bill once the 90-day continuing resolution ends. He attributes this feeling to the lack of the two parties being able to work things out. He plans to step up his organization’s efforts during the Congressional recess to prod Republicans that opposed the Senate version of the bill to vote in favor of the long-term legislation. Many others that support the transportation legislation that were initially hopeful for a long-term bill are not very optimistic at this point. They are becoming less sure whether Congress will approve a longer version of the legislation. Janet Kavinoky, the executive director of transportation and infrastructure with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce felt that House of Representatives will have to work hard to come up with a multi-year bill that can make it into conference committee. She feels that if legislation doesn’t get completed after the recess, it will probably get delayed until after the elections.

#### **Highways policy is highly controversial**

Laing, 5/31/2012 ((Keith, Staff reporter for The Hill, GOP Rep. Broun draws line in the sand over spending in transit compromise bill, The Hill, http://thehill.com/blogs/transportation-report/highways-bridges-and-roads/230271-gop-lawmaker-wants-conferees-to-limit-highway-spending-to-trust-fund-levels)

Georgia Rep. Paul Broun (R) is calling for members of the conference committee that is negotiating a new federal highway bill to limit the amount of spending to the amount of money brought in by the federal gas tax. Broun, a staunchly conservative member of the House Republican caucus, is introducing a motion to instruct House members of the transportation conference to cap spending at the approximately $35 billion that is brought in per year by the highway trust fund, his office said. Transportation observers worried Thursday that the motion signaled the Republican-led House was taking a hard line in negotiations that have been going on among the 47-member conference committee for the better part of a month. But Broun said transportation advocates should live within their means in any new road and transit funding bill that becomes law this year. "Over the past month there has been lots of happy talk about passing the transportation bill but this … is the House saying that they are not interested in working together and they are going to derail the process," Schank said in a statement. The Senate's version of the measure spends about $13 billion more than is brought in each year by the 18.4 cents-per-gallon tax on gas that is used to fill the coffers of the highway trust fund. The House had originally favored a five-year, $260-billion bill that also spent more per year than the highway trust fund's annual intake.

#### **Conservative Groups pushing against highway bill**

Laing, 6/29/2012 (Keith, Staff reporter for The Hill specifically focusing on transportation, Conservative groups rev up opposition to highway bill, The Hill, http://thehill.com/blogs/transportation-report/highways-bridges-and-roads/235533-conservative-groups-rev-up-opposition-to-highway-bill)

Conservative groups are pressuring lawmakers to vote against an agreement between the House and Senate for a $105 billion transportation-spending bill. The lower chamber is expected to hold a final vote on the measure on Friday. The pressure from groups like the Heritage Foundation’s political arm and the anti-tax Club for Growth raises the possibility that conservatives in the House will put up a roadblock to the long-sought bicameral transportation agreement — and in the process put the brakes on a painstakingly negotiated compromise with the Democratically controlled Senate. Both the Heritage Foundation’s political committee and the Club for Growth warned lawmakers on Thursday they would hold votes in favor of it against lawmakers in the run-up to November's election. “The transportation portion authorizes $53.3 billion per year in spending, $15 billion more per year than the plan proposed by House Republicans last July, which would have successfully ‘realigned’ spending with revenues coming into the federal Highway Trust Fund,” the Heritage Foundation’s Action for America group said in an alert to its members. RedState.com editor Erick Erickson said the transportation bill was "a massive increase in federal gluttony."

# **Pipelines Links**

## Obama Good

### Unpopular in Congress

#### **Pipelines controversial, Keystone proves**

Goode and Everett, 6/27/2012 (Darren-senior energy & environment reporter for POLITICO Pro, Burgess-transportation reporter for POLITICO Pro. Keystone pipeline not making the conference cut, Politico Pro, http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0612/77902.html)

The hugely controversial Keystone XL pipeline will not be part of the final transportation deal, a senior lawmaker and congressional aides said Wednesday. Inhofe reaffirmed what was the conventional wisdom in recent days that Republicans were willing to give up the Keystone and coal ash riders if they were able to add in their preferred language expediting environmental reviews of transportation projects. “Keystone and coal ash are really kind of one-shot deals. If you get on streamlining, that’s for the next decade or so,” Inhofe told a group of reporters. The final deal is expected to include a "robust" environmental streamlining section, aides said. The pipeline has been in the center of a spirited and mostly partisan debate this election year over President Barack Obama’s energy record. Congressional transportation negotiators — who are racing to finish a bicameral deal this week — are largely leaving out controversial environmental and energy riders House Republicans have particularly advocated. The reason: Lawmakers really want to get this bill through. There is even discussion to couple the transportation bill with the student loan deal, also up against the clock.

#### **Pipelines are a highly partisan issue**

Summers, 6/15/2012 (Juana, national political reporter for POLITICO, Mitt Romney: President Obama driving U.S. ‘forward over a cliff’, Politico, http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0612/77427.html)

Romney sought to drive a wedge between Obama’s policies and their results, pointing specifically to the health-care law, the Dodd-Frank financial regulatory reform bill, energy policy and the Keystone XL pipeline. Meanwhile, Romney outlined his own priorities for his first term in office, including eliminating the health-care law, creating more jobs, reducing the federal deficit and building the Keystone pipeline even “if I have to build it myself to get it here.”

#### **GOP supports pipelines, dems don’t**

Goode, 5/24/2012 (Darren, senior energy & environment reporter for POLITICO Pro, House GOP vows to keep pushing measures on energy, Politico Pro, http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0512/76741.html)

 “You’ll see legislation come from this,” he told reporters on a conference call. But whether any of it will get through the Senate, “I don’t know,” he said. The House has passed a bunch of energy measures that the Senate has allowed to languish during this Congress, including efforts to gut EPA regulations and approve the Keystone XL pipeline. But regardless, McCarthy said Republicans need to keep moving bills and “put the pressure” on the Senate and House Democrats. It’s especially important “before an election [in which] the American public will make a decision on the direction they want to go,” he said. McCarthy said an “all of the above” energy platform includes providing financial certainty for the wind industry. “The president supports this, but he says no to Keystone,” he said. “We will do the wind, but we will do Keystone, we will do solar, we will do coal.”

#### **Keystone proves, partisan divide on pipelines**

Parker, 2012 (Alex, reporter at USNEWS and World Report, Despite Failed Vote, GOP Sees Victory in Keystone Pipeline, US News, http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2012/03/08/despite-failed-vote-gop-sees-victory-in-keystone-pipeline)

Even as Democrats were able to hold the line and beat back a Republican attempt to force through the controversial Keystone Pipeline project, the GOP feels it has hit a potent election-year issue. 2The Keystone XL Pipeline project, which has been in the works since 2005, got caught up in congressional politicking last year. Responding to environmental concerns, the administration initially delayed a decision on whether to permit construction until 2013, enraging Republicans who claimed that the project was necessary to boost job growth. The issue quickly became an ideological symbol for both sides, and also became a bargaining chip in negotiations over the payroll tax cut. After Congress passed a provision forcing the administration to make a decision, the White House refused to move forward, although it claimed it would give the project a second look after environmental studies are considered. Democrats argued that even if the Keystone project were approved—and even if it were up and running—it would only have a negligible effect on gas prices, because the oil would likely be exported to other countries.

# **Army Corps/Waterways Links**

## Obama Good Links

### Unpopular With Public

**Corps unpopular with public-Katrina failure and distorting analyses**

**Edwards, 2012** (Chris, director of tax policy studies at the Cato Institute, Edwards was a senior economist on the congressional Joint Economic Committee, a manager with PricewaterhouseCoopers, and an economist with the Tax Foundation, “Cutting the Army Corps of Engineers,” http://finance.townhall.com/columnists/chrisedwards/2012/03/19/cutting\_the\_army\_corps\_of\_engineers/page/full/)

Some of these charges still ring true. The nation was reacquainted with the Corps' shoddy engineering with the tragic failure of the levees in New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina. In recent years, the Corps has hidden information from the public, and has been caught distorting economic analyses to justify wasteful projects. Because of its pro-construction mindset, the Corps continues to pursue projects that would damage the environment and produce limited economic benefits. In recent decades, for example, "the Corps has channelized dozens of rivers for barges that never arrived."35

**Plan unpopular- taxpayers have to pay**

**Southern, 2012** (Illinois newspaper, “New waterways bill draws criticism,” April 16, 2012, http://thesouthern.com/news/local/new-waterways-bill-draws-criticism/article\_5edfa54e-877c-11e1-ae16-0019bb2963f4.html)

**A recent bill dealing with maintenance of the country’s waterways**, co-sponsored by U.S. Rep Jerry Costello, D-Belleville, is drawing fire **for its revamping of funding measures that critics say shift more of the cost burden to taxpayers**. **Costello and U.S. Rep. Ed Whitfield, R-Ky., announced** March 30 their filing of the Waterways Are Vital for the Economy, Energy, Efficiency and Environment Act of 2012, or the **WAVE4 Act**. A joint news release from Costello and Whitfield about the bill said the WAVE4 Act requires, among other things, the use of objective criteria for the prioritization of essential construction and major rehabilitation projects and protects against cost overruns. Additionally, **the news release said it revises the current cost-sharing structure for inland waterways projects, reforms the Army Corps of Engineers internal project delivery process and calls for additional contributions from the waterways industry to pay for these vital infrastructure investments.**

# Ports Links

## Obama Good

### Unpopular in Congress

#### **Tight Budget makes spending on seaports unpopular in Congress**

AP, 6/21/12 (Associated Press, Report to Congress says seaports on Southeast, Gulf coasts need deeper water for giant ships, The Washington Post, http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/report-to-congress-says-seaports-on-southeast-gulf-coasts-need-deeper-water-for-giant-ships/2012/06/21/gJQAjzrJtV\_story.html)

U.S. seaports in the Southeast likely need up to $5 billion to deepen their shipping channels so they can trade with supersized cargo ships expected to arrive soon through an expanded Panama Canal, a federal agency said Thursday in a report to Congress. The budget crisis has made federal funding for port projects extremely tight, especially since Congress and President Barack Obama for the past two years have sworn off so-called “earmark” spending that was used to fund such projects in the past. The Army Corps report said current funding levels for port improvements won’t cover all the projects that should be done. If Congress won’t increase the agency’s funding for harbor projects, the report said, then perhaps state governments and private companies such as shipping lines should be required to pay a greater share.

#### Seaports are Unpopular with the People and Congress

Shaw, 2006 (GWYNETH K, March 4, Baltimore Sun Reporter, Senators ask role for Congress in latest review of ports deal, http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2006-03-04/news/0603040105\_1\_dp-world-deal-review)

WASHINGTON -- Five Republican and five Democratic senators sent a letter to their party leaders yesterday, asking for cooperation in giving [Congress](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2006-03-04/news/0603040105_1_dp-world-deal-review) a role in the Bush administration's latest review of Dubai Ports World's planned takeover of some operations at the port of Baltimore and five other major U.S. seaports. In a letter to Senate Republican leader Bill Frist and Democratic leader Harry Reid, the 10 senators said they were "encouraged" by DP World's offer to submit to a more in-depth, 45-day review of its plan to buy British-based Peninsular & Oriental Steam [Navigation](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2006-03-04/news/0603040105_1_dp-world-deal-review) Co. The deal has been approved by a court in Britain, but a last-minute effort to stop the transaction is not expected to be resolved until at least Monday. The company formally filed for the 45-day review yesterday, but it was unclear when it would begin. The senators asked for assurances that other parts of legislation they introduced this week would be addressed, including a promise to keep Congress apprised of the investigation, the opportunity for lawmakers to review the probe's findings for 30 days, and the power to veto the deal if concerns about the transaction are not fully resolved. "If we need to press for a vote on our legislation or to introduce further legislation to achieve the goals outlined above, we hope you will work with us in the coming weeks," the senators said. "The administration must know that we stand united to examine and review this deal independently, and that Congress must have a role in determining whether it should go forward or be stopped as a result of national security concerns." Republicans signing the letter were Sens. Norm Coleman of Minnesota, Susan Collins and Olympia J. Snowe of Maine, Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania and Tom Coburn of Oklahoma. Democrats included Sens. Charles E. Schumer and Hillary Rodham Clinton of New York, New Jersey's Robert Menendez and Frank R. Lautenberg, and Jack Reed of Rhode Island. All have raised questions about the sale of P&O -- which runs some operations at ports in Baltimore; New York; Newark, N.J.; Philadelphia; Miami, and New Orleans -- to DP World, which is owned by the government of Dubai, part of the United Arab Emirates. The transaction was approved in January by a federal government panel, the Committee on Foreign [Investment](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2006-03-04/news/0603040105_1_dp-world-deal-review) in the United States, which will also conduct the 45-day probe. The deal is deeply unpopular with the American public and has prompted a flurry of legislation in Congress, some of which is aimed at undoing the deal. In the [House](http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2006-03-04/news/0603040105_1_dp-world-deal-review), New York Republican Rep. Peter T. King has attracted 96 co-sponsors for a bill similar to the one proposed by the 10 senators. After DP World voluntarily agreed to a new review, many lawmakers said they were willing to delay taking action to stop the deal. But they don't want to be surprised again. "This is a time-sensitive process, and I am hopeful we can work to ensure that the legislative branch has a voice in the final outcome," Snowe said in a statement yesterday. Others are openly skeptical about the thoroughness of another probe, especially since President Bush has said he hasn't changed his mind about his support for the deal. "While I am pleased the administration is finally undertaking the investigation it should have done in the first place, there are serious questions about both its willingness and its ability to act on the results," Menendez said in a statement. "With the president prejudging the outcome of the investigation before it even began, it is clearer than ever that Congress will need to take an up or down vote on this sale."

#### **Congress doesn’t like funding ports – view it as useless**

Smith, 2012 (Bruce, The Washington Post, 6/21/12, “Report to Congress says seaports on Southeast, Gulf coasts need deeper water for giant ships,” http://www.washingtonpost.com/national/report-to-congress-says-seaports-on-southeast-gulf-coasts-need-deeper-water-for-giant-ships/2012/06/21/gJQAjzrJtV\_story.html)

The budget crisis has made federal funding for port projects extremely tight, especially since Congress and President Barack Obama for the past two years have sworn off so-called “earmark” spending that was used to fund such projects in the past. The Army Corps report said current funding levels for port improvements won’t cover all the projects that should be done. If Congress won’t increase the agency’s funding for harbor projects, the report said, then perhaps state governments and private companies such as shipping lines should be required to pay a greater share.