



AMERICANS FOR TAX REFORM

LEGISLATIVE ALERT

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Taxpayers Lose Under Transportation Reauthorization Bill

President Bush has appropriately repeated that he will veto H.R. 3550, the Transportation Equity Act of 2004 in its current form, because it significantly exceeds the amount of funding requested and contains needless provisions and spending proposals that do nothing to meet the nation's transportation infrastructure needs or alleviate congested highways. **Americans for Tax Reform (ATR), the nations leading taxpayer advocacy group, strongly supports the President's intentions to veto the bill and urges members to vote against H.R. 3550, the Transportation Equity Act of 2004 in its current form.**

The \$256 billion highway funding bill proposed by President Bush in his budget represents a 17% increase over the last six-year transportation funding plan. The fiscally appropriate amount proposed by the President would meet the nation's transportation safety and infrastructure needs without raising the federal gasoline tax.

Unfortunately, Chairman Don Young and the House Transportation Committee passed a \$275 billion that is significantly higher than the Presidents request. While the legislation does contain some positive provisions, there are far to many spending proposals that do nothing to meet the nation's transportation infrastructure needs or alleviate congested highways.

Some of the more egregious provisions include:

- **\$1.2 billion for bike paths.** In addition, the H.R. 3550 contains funding set asides for hiking trails, nature centers, obesity programs for children, and battlefield preservation.
- **2,800 earmarks, which is 1,000 more than in last transportation reauthorization bill (TEA-21).**
- **A reopener clause that requires an increase in overall spending beyond the current levels in the bill.** Moreover, H.R. 3550 is not clear as to whether or not this increase in spending will have to be funded with new taxes.

The current bill is significantly above the level requested by the President and represents a 32% increase in funding as compared to TEA-21, and contains legislative language that does not meet the nation's transportation infrastructure needs, alleviate congested highways, and has the potential to harm taxpayers in the future. **Therefore, ATR urges members to oppose H.R.3550, the Transportation Equity Act of 2004 and recommends that members sign the letter to President Bush being circulated by Representative Christopher Cox stating that members will uphold any Presidential veto of a bill that would result in unnecessary funding.**

ATR MAY RATE THIS VOTE IN OUR ANNUAL CONGRESSIONAL RATINGS