

KEY VOTE ALERT!

April 18, 2012

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the world's largest business federation representing the interests of more than three million businesses and organizations of every size, sector, and region, strongly urges you to vote for H.R. 4348, the "Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2012, Part II." The Chamber strongly supports this important legislation, and the accompanying rule, H. Res. 619. Investment in transportation and energy has proven to grow jobs, and the need for Congress to act on both transportation infrastructure and expanding domestic energy production is clear. In addition, the Chamber supports the RESTORE Act component of this legislation, as well as the amendments made in order by the Rules Committee related to the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund, environmental streamlining, and coal ash.

It is time for the House to act on the highway and public transportation reauthorization bill. The Chamber strongly supports passage of the 90 day extension in order to move to conference with the Senate and ultimately produce a conference report on highway and public transportation reauthorization, which can be signed by the President by June 30th. Make no mistake: the Chamber does not support an extension for the sake of an extension, as a route to devolution, or a vehicle for forcing deep cuts in federal transportation investment. The Chamber is seeking a highway and transit reauthorization bill that would, at a minimum, maintain funding levels; institute critical federal policy and program reforms such as those proffered by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure in H.R. 7, the "American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act"; and provide certainty through September 2013, if not longer, provided that the offsets to pay for the bill do not levy retroactive tax increases or other punitive tax increases.

The legislation's Keystone XL pipeline provisions would be an important step toward energy security. The proposed 1,600-mile Keystone XL pipeline, which would deliver more than 700,000 barrels of oil per day from Alberta, Canada, through Cushing, Oklahoma, to Gulf Coast refineries. The \$7 billion project is expected to create more than 20,000 jobs during the manufacturing and construction phases of the project. The pipeline would also reduce the need for foreign oil imports from less stable regions of the world. In addition, Keystone XL would provide much-needed supply distribution infrastructure for American domestic energy producers in the Upper Northwest/Bakken region and in the Southwest.

The Chamber also supports the "Resources and Ecosystems Sustainability, Tourist Opportunities, and Revived Economy of the Gulf Coast Act of 2011" (RESTORE Act). The RESTORE Act would redirect a portion of the civil penalties collected from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill to Gulf Coast restoration. The RESTORE Act is a common sense and bipartisan approach to a difficult situation that has impacted the entire Gulf region.



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The Chamber strongly supports the three amendments made in order by the rule that would strengthen the underlying legislation, including:

- Rep. Boustany’s which would include a guarantee requiring that the total amount available for spending from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund (HMTF) each fiscal year is equal to the HMTF receipts as estimated by the President's budget for that year. This guarantee is needed to ensure maintenance dredging of the nation’s harbors and navigation channels. According to the Army Corps of Engineers, these arteries of commerce are increasingly blocked: almost 30 percent of commercial vessel calls at U.S. ports are constrained due to inadequate channel depths. This impedes the nation’s trade and global competitiveness.
- Rep. Ribble’s which would add to the bill the environmental streamlining provisions from Title III of the American Energy and Infrastructure Jobs Act (H.R. 7). The Ribble amendment would save time and money by streamlining and condensing the project review process by cutting bureaucratic red tape, allowing federal agencies to review transportation projects concurrently, and setting hard deadlines for federal agencies to approve projects, in addition to providing states with more approval authority.
- Rep. McKinley’s which contains the text of H.R. 2273, the “Coal Residuals Reuse and Management Act.” EPA is considering a rule to classify coal combustion residuals (CCRs) as hazardous wastes, a decision that could likely force between 184,000 and 316,000 people out of work. Even if EPA decides to treat CCRs as non-hazardous waste, the agency’s regulations would likely cost between 39,000 and 65,000 jobs. H.R. 2273 would protect public health and the environment by building on state programs to safely regulate coal combustion residuals (CCR) without unduly burdening already strained state budgets and staff resources, hamstringing the vital CCR reuse industry, or killing jobs.

Passing transportation reauthorization legislation is a specific action Congress and the Administration can take right now to support job growth and economic productivity without adding to the deficit. **The Chamber urges the House to pass H.R. 4348. The Chamber may include votes on, or in relation to, H.R. 4348—including the vote on the rule, H. Res. 619, and amendments made in order—in our annual *How They Voted* scorecard.**

Sincerely,



R. Bruce Josten