



# **Chairman Hal Rogers**

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## **House Committee on Appropriations**

**Full Committee Markup – Fiscal Year 2015 Transportation, Housing and Urban  
Development Appropriations Bill  
May 21, 2014  
Opening Statement As Prepared**

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Welcome, everyone. Today, we are marking up our fourth bill for the 2015 fiscal year – Transportation, Housing and Urban Development. I'm glad we are here today, continuing our excellent clip as we work toward completing our appropriations work by the end of the fiscal year.

This is a busy couple of weeks for the Committee – in addition to today's action, we approved our Agriculture bill in subcommittee yesterday. And moving into next week, I just want to give our Members advance warning: We have to fit in a week's worth of work into three days. That will entail moving at least three more bills through either subcommittee or full committee, plus CJS on the floor. So – get ready.

Now, I'd like to turn to Chairman Latham to present the fiscal year 2015 Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development Appropriations Bill.

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Thank you both for your statements and for your careful work on this bill.

I know this bill must be bittersweet, as you are both nearing the final months of your service as Members of Congress.

Chairman Latham, you've always been a voice of reason on this Committee and in Congress, keeping an even keel under the most turbulent of circumstances. Your understanding of fiscal issues has been an asset to this Committee, and your commitment to Iowa and your country has always been exemplary. I'm very grateful for all you've done, and we will miss you and your leadership greatly next year.

Mr. Pastor, thank you for hard work on this bill and for your service to this committee over the years. You are passionately dedicated to Arizona and your district, and you've always been a sincere, gregarious, and dedicated partner in the Appropriations process. We will miss you.

The Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill focuses \$52 billion in discretionary funding on the infrastructure that grows the American economy and on the housing programs that protect our most vulnerable citizens.

All of these investments are important – important to our economic growth, important to the safety of our citizens, and important to those people who might worry about whether or not they will have a roof over their heads tomorrow.

But we also must be mindful of the limited funding we have in our federal coffers today, and the debt we risk putting on the backs of our children and our grandchildren if we spend beyond our means and if we continue to multiply our mandatory commitments.

The bill before you today strikes a fine balance between fiscal restraint, careful investment in our nation's transportation infrastructure, and economic well-being. It rejects the Administration's attempt to move highway programs to the mandatory side of the ledger, where it would exacerbate an already unsustainable rate of spending. And it finds responsible places to trim funding so that we can direct needed taxpayer dollars to the programs that will do the most good.

This bill totals \$1.2 billion more than last year's enacted level, but taking technical adjustments into account, it is more accurately described as \$1.8 billion below the current level. This is because we are facing a substantial decline in Federal Housing Administration receipts, which offset some of the spending in this bill.

The improvement of our nation's transportation infrastructure is one of our chief priorities, so we have provided nearly \$40.25 billion from the Highway Trust Fund – the same level as this year – for these programs. However, as you know, this funding relies on our colleagues on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee devising a way to address the challenges facing the Highway Trust Fund before this summer, and the enactment of new transportation authorization legislation.

We have also made sure that full funding is provided for all FAA air traffic control personnel as well as FAA's Next Generation Air Transportation Systems, which will help keep air travel running smoothly now and into the future. We have rejected the Administration's proposals that would impose new passenger facility and general aviation fees.

Safety is also a priority of this committee – so we have increased funding for a variety of transportation safety programs that affect not just our roads and airways, but also our waterways and pipelines.

Within the Department of Housing and Urban Development, we have increased funding for Public and Indian Housing by \$6.2 million. This will ensure that all those currently served by the program continue to receive assistance.

And we have fully funded the President's request for veterans' housing vouchers. Other housing programs maintain funding levels that will continue assistance to all those currently served.

While there is always more to do, I believe this bill makes the absolute most with what it has – using a reasonable, fiscally responsible allocation to help prepare our nation for future economic growth, shore up our transportation infrastructure, keep our skies safe and efficient, and provide housing for those in dire need.

This is a smart step in the right direction – and I urge my colleagues to support it today.

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