



# **Chairman Mario Diaz-Balart**

*Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban  
Development, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations*

**Full Committee Markup – FY 2016 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development  
Appropriations Bill  
May 13, 2015  
Opening Statement As Prepared**

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Good morning. I join with the Chairman in extending our thoughts and prayers to the passengers, victims and first responders who were involved in last night's Amtrak derailment. This was a sad and scary event. As with any transportation disaster, the NTSB will conduct a thorough and professional investigation and issue a report of their findings, and from those findings, we will take action.

Today, I am pleased to present the fiscal year 2016 THUD bill to the Committee for your consideration, with goal of bringing the THUD bill to the floor. In total resources, the bill before you today provides \$108.7 billion in budget authority and obligation limitation for the various programs in the Departments of Transportation and Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies. CBO has scored us at the set 302(b) level of \$55.27 billion in discretionary budget authority - \$1.5 billion above the enacted FY 2015 levels, but when comparing appropriated dollars, this bill is really only \$25 million over 2015.

I want to thank Ranking Member Price for his willingness to discuss the issues and challenges of the programs and funding levels under our jurisdiction. I hope there are more than a few bright spots of common ground in the funding levels we were able to achieve.

I'd like to thank Chairman Rogers for his support and very generous allocation to this subcommittee. Many of the financial holes we face in crafting this bill are due to factors beyond our control and the additional funds went to simply backfilling unpredictable CBO scoring and inflation factors of housing programs.

I'd like to thank Ranking Member Lowey for her contributions to making the safety programs a priority for this bill and her commitment to the process.

Finally I'd like to thank the members of the subcommittee. We held a number of hearings and people asked a lot of good, relevant questions. I'm pleased to say our agencies have responded to the questions for the record – with the exception of the FAA – and the Subcommittee's hearing volumes are ready to be published.

I would be remiss if I didn't recognize the incredible hard work of the professional committee staff: Dena Baron, Doug Disrud, Cheryle Tucker, Carl Barrick, Jenny Hollrah, and Kate Hallahan and Joe Carlile on the Minority staff. I'd also like to recognize Cesar Gonzalez and Miguel Mendoza on my personal staff.

This is a balanced bill. I'd like to highlight a few areas that are of great importance to Members of the Committee:

- We meet the oblim levels contained in the current MAP-21 extension for surface programs. We support the authorizing committees proposing an extension bill to carry these important programs forward.
- We provide \$100 million for new TIGER awards.
- We provide \$129 million over last year for FAA operations to ensure the orderly operation of the air traffic control system.
- For FAA NextGen investments, the bill includes \$931 million.
- Every single one of FTA's signed full funding grant agreements is funded consistent with the agreed-upon payout schedule, and all the proposed small starts are funded. Further, we provide \$250 million for up and coming agreements and \$40 million for core capacity projects.
- CDBG is funded at last year's level of \$3 billion - \$200 million more than the request.
- HOME is funded at \$900 million through appropriations and trust funds.
- Other housing programs are funded at levels sufficient to continue providing a HUD-assisted housing option.

To be able to meet these priorities, we made some strategic reductions to capital accounts and we scrubbed the bill for overhead savings. Further, this bill has no new programs, no new fees, and almost all S&E accounts are at last year's level or lower. I've also tried to be sensitive and accommodate the priorities of the members of this Committee. Where we could, we included your requests.

I've seen some comments that this bill contains foreign policy provisions. Let me be clear: we have included narrowly crafted provisions to continue a basic rule of law principle that we should not allow the trafficking of or profiting from confiscated property, in other words, stolen property.

I'm sure there will be a few remarks today about more money. I'd like to remind people that if we wrote to a number that exceeded the budget resolution, the sequestration that would hit in 2016 wouldn't take into account our priorities. We wouldn't be able to protect the transportation systems our nation depends on, or provide housing to millions of American families. This bill takes steps to make sure our highest priorities are adequately funded.

I believe we have a balanced bill, meeting the budget agreement, and I urge the Committee's support.

Thank you and I yield the balance of my time.

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