

White House opposes House transportation, housing spending measure

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By [Vicki Needham](#) - 06/09/14 06:00 PM EDT

The Obama administration said Monday that it strongly opposes passage a spending bill that would provide funding for transportation and housing projects.

The White House detailed its objections to reductions in spending on infrastructure grants, rail projects as well as for various public housing programs.

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"The bill fails to make needed investments in our nation's infrastructure, provides insufficient support for critical housing programs for low-income Americans and the homeless and includes objectionable language provisions," the [statement of administration policy](#) (SAP) said.

On Monday, the House is beginning consideration of the measure, which was [approved by](#) the House Appropriations Committee on May 7.

Last week, the [Senate Appropriations](#) Committee moved forward with a \$54.4 billion bill, which is \$2.4 billion smaller than the House's measure

Major differences include the Senate's \$550 million spending level for Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) infrastructure grants compared with \$100 million in the House version, and \$1.39 billion for Amtrak, which is \$200 million above the House's funding levels.

The administration said that it "strongly opposes" the \$200 million reduction from last year's levels for passenger rail programs, "which would result in significant delays in much needed capital investments and contribute to deteriorating performance."

"The committee's proposed funding level, which freezes obligation limitations for highway, transit, and highway safety at fiscal 2014 authorized levels, demonstrates why a robust, multi-year authorization is essential to provide the funding boost that states and municipalities require to make the necessary and transformative transportation investments that their citizens are demanding," the SAP said.

The administration argued that the TIGER funding reduction "would reduce an already highly competitive grant program and its ability to support innovative projects across the United States."

At the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the administration said it is "deeply concerned" about the funding level provided for the Housing Choice Vouchers program, which doesn't match last year's level and would not restore the sequestration cut.

The White House also expressed strong opposition to the funding levels in several more housing programs including Homeless Assistance Grants, which the House funds at \$2.1 billion, \$301 million below the president's request.

The lack of funding "would not allow for the development of any new permanent supportive housing as part

of the administration's efforts to end chronic homelessness in 2016," the SAP said.

The administration expressed concern about the \$25 million in funding for Choice Neighborhoods, which is \$95 million below the budget request, ensuring that public housing authorities "will be extraordinarily limited in their ability to revitalize distressed HUD-assisted housing."

There also was concern for less-than-requested funding for the Public Housing Operating Fund and Capital Fund programs, HUD's Housing Counseling program, the agency's IT Fund and lead hazard control grants.

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