

Obama transportation bill introduced in House

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By [Keith Laing](#) - 06/12/14 03:44 PM EDT

President Obama's proposed **\$302 billion** transportation bill has been introduced in the House, though the chamber is unlikely to do much with the measure.

The bill, which has been dubbed the Grow America Act, would extend federal transportation that is currently scheduled to expire at the end of September for four years.

The measure is being sponsored by Washington, D.C. Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D) and Rep. Tom Petri (R-Wis.), who is retiring at the end of his term. It calls for using approximately \$150 billion from a corporate tax reform proposal that has stalled on Capitol Hill to help pay for transportation projects.

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Norton said in a statement that Petri was introducing Obama's bill at her request because it was important to give the president's proposal a full hearing in the lower chamber.

"With the goal of trying to get greater focus on surface transportation reauthorization before the Highway Trust Fund becomes insolvent, I was in touch with Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx about introducing the administration's bill," she said. "He agreed, and, subsequently Chairman Tom Petri, as a courtesy, agreed to introduce the bill at the request of the administration."

Lawmakers are trying to find a way to close a **shortfall** in transportation funding that is estimated to be as high as \$15 billion before the Department of Transportation runs out of money for its Highway Trust Fund,

which budget analysts have said could happen in August without congressional action.

The traditional source for transportation funding is revenue that is collected by the federal gas tax, which has been stagnant since 1993 and was not indexed to inflation. The tax only brings in about \$34 billion per year, however, and the current level of transportation spending infrastructure is about \$50 billion annually.

Transportation advocates have pushed Congress to [increase](#) the gas tax for the first time in two decades to close the gap, but lawmakers have been reluctant to raise taxes in the middle of an election year.

Obama has said his proposal would provide enough money to increase the amount of annual transportation to approximately \$75 billion.

Norton said Thursday that the administration's "four-year bill is a timely contribution as Congress works towards passage of a long-term surface transportation authorization, and should provide guidance and ideas as we develop legislation to set the future course of these vital programs."

"The Grow America Act recognizes that we have fallen behind, and calls for increasing investments in modernizing the nation's roads, bridges, railways, and transit systems," Norton said. "We cannot address our infrastructure deficit by just continuing to provide baseline levels of funding."

The title of Obama's proposal stands for Generating Renewal, Opportunity, and Work with Accelerated Mobility, Efficiency, and Rebuilding of Infrastructure and Communities throughout America.

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