

S 1541

Transportation Empowerment Act

Congress: 114 (2015–2017, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Transportation and Public Works

Introduced: Jun 10, 2015

Current Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance.

Latest Action: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance. (Jun 10, 2015)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1541>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Lee, Mike [R-UT]

Party: Republican • **State:** UT • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors (5 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Crapo, Mike [R-ID]	R · ID		Jun 10, 2015
Sen. Cruz, Ted [R-TX]	R · TX		Jun 10, 2015
Sen. Flake, Jeff [R-AZ]	R · AZ		Jun 10, 2015
Sen. Rubio, Marco [R-FL]	R · FL		Jun 10, 2015
Sen. Vitter, David [R-LA]	R · LA		Jun 10, 2015

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Finance Committee	Senate	Referred To	Jun 10, 2015

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Transportation and Public Works

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
114 HR 2716	Related bill	Jun 11, 2015: Referred to the Subcommittee on Highways and Transit.

Transportation Empowerment Act

This bill prescribes a limitation on funding of transportation programs and projects for FY2016-FY2020.

Appropriations out of the Highway Trust Fund (HTF) (other than the Mass Transit Account) are authorized for FY2016-FY2020, subject to a certain limitation, for specified core programs under the federal-aid highway program, including:

- emergency relief for highways and roads,
- the federal lands transportation program, and
- Federal Highway Administration administrative expenses.

A state may transfer and use excess federal-aid highway funds for any surface transportation project (including mass transit and rail).

Certain limits are placed on federal assistance to states for highway bridge replacement and rehabilitation to bridges on the federal-aid highway system.

Beginning with FY2015, a highway construction or improvement project shall not be considered a federal project:

- unless and until a state expends federal funds for the construction portion of the project,
- solely by reason of the state expenditure of federal funds before the construction phase of the project (including for any environmental document or design work), or
- upon state reimbursement to the federal government of the federal costs of such projects.

The Internal Revenue Code is amended to make amounts in the HTF available for expenditure for core highway programs through FY2022.

The Department of the Treasury shall pay from the HTF into the Treasury general fund amounts equivalent to the floor stocks refunds made before July 1, 2022, as well as into the Airport and Airway Trust Fund amounts equivalent to certain aviation fuel taxes received before October 1, 2022.

A motor fuel tax rate schedule is prescribed for the financing of core highway programs.

Treasury authority to make certain transfers to the Mass Transit Account shall be terminated at the end of FY2016, at which time Treasury shall transfer all amounts from the Mass Transit Account to the Highway Account.

The national highway performance program is revised to repeal program requirements for specified National Highway System transportation improvement projects, including environmental mitigation projects.

The surface transportation program is revised to eliminate from eligibility for program assistance:

- carpool projects, fringe and corridor parking facilities and programs, including electric vehicle and natural gas vehicle infrastructure, and bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways projects;
- transportation alternatives; and
- environmental mitigation projects, including environmental restoration and pollution abatement projects.

Also repealed are:

- the obligation of a state to use a portion of program funds for replacement or rehabilitation of off-system bridges,
- metropolitan transportation planning requirements for federal-aid highways, and
- the authorization of federal assistance to states for historic bridges.

Certain requirements of the highway safety improvement program are revised or repealed, eliminating eligibility for projects for pedestrian or bicyclist safety or safety of persons with disabilities.

The congestion mitigation and air quality improvement program and the transportation alternatives program are repealed.

Appropriations out of the HTF (other than the Mass Transit Account) are authorized for FY2016-FY2020 for the highway research and development program.

Treasury shall allocate to the states for surface transportation projects (including mass transit and rail) any excess highway tax receipts appropriated to the HTF in FY2016-FY2019.

Excise taxes on gasoline, diesel fuel or kerosene, and diesel-water fuel emulsion are reduced.

Credits or refunds are required for certain floor stocks taxes on liquids imposed before October 1, 2020.

This Act shall become effective only if the Office of Management and Budget certifies that it is deficit neutral.

Actions Timeline

- **Jun 10, 2015:** Introduced in Senate
- **Jun 10, 2015:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Finance.