

**COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**  
**OVERSIGHT PLAN FOR THE 112<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS**  
*January 26, 2011*

In accordance with Rule X of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure is responsible for determining whether laws and programs within its jurisdiction are being implemented according to Congressional intent and whether they should be continued, curtailed, or eliminated. As appropriate, the Committee will investigate ways to improve the overall performance and operation of the agencies and entities it oversees, and eliminate fraud, wasteful spending, abuse and mismanagement where possible.

In the 112th Congress, the Committee will review the activities of government agencies and entities within its jurisdiction and the public and private interests they affect or regulate. The Committee will focus its oversight authority on determining: (1) how the departments and agencies under its jurisdiction can spend fewer taxpayer dollars while continuing to carry out their statutory mandates; (2) how to decrease the size of departments and agencies that implement the Committee's authorized programs; and (3) how best to utilize government resources to create jobs and economic opportunities for all Americans.

The oversight and investigation functions are vested at the Full Committee level. Oversight and investigation activities will be coordinated between the Full Committee and the Subcommittees. This structure will facilitate oversight of issues that cut across the jurisdiction of several Subcommittees. One example of such a cross-cutting issue is how to reduce transportation congestion by streamlining project approvals, while at the same time preventing environmental degradation. This issue affects several Subcommittees, since road, rail, sea, and air transportation all experience congestion. A coordinated oversight agenda can facilitate defining the causes of congestion and fashioning multi-modal solutions and reforms that offer congestion relief. Oversight activities will include hearings, briefings, correspondence, reports, media releases, and public statements.

Full Committee oversight and investigation issues include:

**Streamlining Department of Transportation Policies, Programs and Procedures**

The Committee will assess existing U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) policies, programs and procedures to seek ways to streamline the processes and eliminate wasteful programs and overly burdensome regulations. Streamlining DOT's and its modal agencies' policies, programs and procedures relates to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's responsibility to ensure the proper balance between safety and economic regulation and the free and efficient flow of commerce that is necessary to create jobs and create economic growth.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Effective review of DOT's policies, programs and procedures will save money by eliminating redundant or ineffective programs, thus using taxpayer money only on programs that are truly needed. It will shrink the government by consolidating redundant programs and eliminating unnecessary or ineffective programs. Further, it will create jobs when a streamlined DOT can efficiently deliver programs to the States and other stakeholders and eliminate any unnecessary red-tape.

### **Stimulus Act Oversight**

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 ("Stimulus") provided \$64.1 billion for programs within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The Committee has and will continue to closely monitor implementation of the Act by all affected departments and agencies within the Committee's jurisdiction. In this economic environment, it has been a top priority of the Committee to ensure the funding is spent creating new jobs. As such, the Committee will continue to monitor whether the grant recipients have submitted accurate job-creation reports in order to learn whether the stimulus money is being well spent.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Oversight of the Stimulus will save money by ensuring grant recipients use their Stimulus funds for the purpose Congress intended - creating jobs and improving the economy, rather than supplanting state and local spending and closing budget shortfalls. It will shrink the government by ensuring the Stimulus funds are spent on their intended purposes. Further, it will create jobs by focusing the Stimulus money on programs and projects that actually create jobs.

### **Effectiveness of DOT Discretionary Grant Programs**

In recent years Congress has designated funding for fewer transportation projects in legislation. In addition, the Stimulus created several large discretionary transportation programs. As a result the amount of funding distributed to projects chosen by DOT through a discretionary process has increased dramatically. As Congress begins to identify areas to cut spending, the Committee will evaluate the value of continuing these discretionary transportation grants. The Committee will investigate the process by which DOT has selected projects to receive discretionary grant awards, and will closely monitor the effectiveness of these programs to ensure they create jobs.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Oversight of DOT's discretionary grant programs will save money by ensuring DOT funds the best projects available through a fair and transparent process. It will shrink the government by eliminating wasteful funding of projects with little to no merit. Further, it will create jobs by streamlining the project selection and funding process, thus facilitating a faster approval and reimbursement process.

## SUBCOMMITTEE ON AVIATION

### **Funding of the Federal Aviation Administration**

An FAA Reauthorization bill passed the House in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress but was not enacted due to the extended debate on several controversial provisions. Instead, the FAA has been operating on a series of short-term extensions. The Subcommittee will pursue a long-term reauthorization bill that will result in job creation, and reformed and streamlined FAA programs and processes. The Subcommittee will continue to ensure the taxes aviation users pay are actually returned to them in the form of aviation infrastructure improvements. Given the importance of aviation to the Nation's economy and the number of jobs supported by a strong aviation sector, the Subcommittee aims to ensure the FAA is spending its scarce resources wisely. Reauthorization hearings will examine how the FAA is funding much-needed aviation infrastructure maintenance and improvement efforts, which FAA programs need reform, and what processes are employed to streamline large, "job-creating" airport improvement projects.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Passage of a long-term FAA reauthorization bill will create jobs, reform and streamline FAA programs and processes to eliminate wasteful spending and inefficient programs, shrink government, and ensure that only necessary aviation infrastructure improvements and maintenance are being funded.

### **Safety Programs**

The Subcommittee has held numerous hearings on the safety of the aviation industry and will continue its oversight in the new Congress. Clearly, maintaining a safe and efficient aviation system is critical to the Nation's economic recovery. The Subcommittee will address topics such as regional airline safety, pilot training, ways to reduce operational errors, and FAA's volunteer reporting, data sharing and assessment programs.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Safety is a critical element of any aviation business plan, and aviation is a key economic engine in the United States. The Committee's oversight of the aviation system will ensure the highest level of safety and allow the economy to recover and grow.

### **Security Programs**

Shortly after the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, the Aviation and Transportation Security Act (ATSA) was enacted. This legislation transferred security responsibility to the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and included directives for improving and strengthening the Nation's transportation security. TSA has grown to a large bureaucracy. Additionally, aviation security and airport screening programs heavily impact the passenger experience and the flow of commerce. TSA is an agency in much need of reform. Oversight of this agency and the implementation of its directives will continue, mostly through a series of classified briefings and roundtables.

*Benefit to the Taxpayer:* The Subcommittee’s oversight over aviation security’s impact on the traveling public, and the particular focus on reducing the bureaucracy of the TSA, will reduce the costs borne by taxpayer, decrease the size of government, seek out and remove barriers imposed on the flow of commerce, and ensure the maximum effectiveness and efficiency of the screening programs that affect the traveling public.

### **NextGen Air Traffic Control Modernization**

The Federal Aviation Administration’s (FAA) air traffic control modernization effort is known as “NextGen” and is expected to replace the current radar and ground-based system with a satellite-based system. Under the NextGen program, most of the air traffic controllers' radar screens, computers, and navigation and surveillance equipment and software are to be replaced. Benefits of this project include: greater system efficiency; reduced noise exposure; reduced emissions and fuel burn; improved safety; increased accuracy and reliability in the equipment and software; and the capability for future computer enhancements. However, this effort has experienced substantial problems, delays, cost overruns, and program changes since it began more than 30 years ago. The Committee will continue to closely monitor the FAA’s progress in meeting important deadlines, setting and achieving metrics, and benefits.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Oversight of the NextGen program will save money by improving efficiency at the Nation’s airports. It will shrink the government by streamlining the current air traffic control process. Further, it will create jobs through the implementation of the new technology.

### **Oversight of Office of the Secretary**

The Office of the Secretary within DOT inherited several aviation functions when the Civil Aeronautics Board was abolished. Many of these functions have a dramatic impact on the industry, competition, and job creation. Hearings may be held to evaluate various DOT programs and policies affecting aviation including slots, essential air service, alliances, international air service, key safety treaties, and the European Union’s Emissions Trading Scheme.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Thorough oversight of the DOT programs and policies will ensure that they encourage job creation, protect United States business interests and jobs, cut wasteful spending, and reduce the size of government.

### **Oversight of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)**

Authorization for the NTSB expired in 2008. A reauthorization bill passed the House in 2010 but was not enacted. A new bill will be introduced in 2011. This could be preceded by oversight hearings or the Subcommittee could rely on the hearings held during the 11<sup>th</sup> Congress.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* The Committee's oversight of the NTSB and development of NTSB reauthorization legislation will allow NTSB to continue fatal accident investigations critical to finding root causes of accidents and make recommendations to improve safety, and improve the efficiency of the Board's operations.

### **Airline Financial Condition and Passenger Service**

The last decade has been a difficult for the commercial airline industry. The impacts of 9/11, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), spikes in fuel prices and the global recession have all taken their toll. Cumulative airline industry losses over the past decade have been as high as \$58 billion. Yet, more recently, the industry has been profitable. According to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics, between January 2010 and September 2010, U.S. scheduled passenger carriers have posted \$7.1 billion in operating profits. As fuel prices are once again on the rise, fuel costs continue to be among the industry's highest cost items and will continue to be a volatile factor in airline profitability.

Air traffic operations and total enplanements have dropped in the last three years. However, over the next decade, the FAA predicts that air traffic operations will increase 2 percent each year. When the economy improves, passenger criticism about flight delays, cancellations, overbooking, poor customer service, and transparency in airfares and ancillary fees charged by airlines will rise again. The Subcommittee will continue to examine ways to maintain the airline industry, review recently established regulations to ensure the proper balance is maintained between safety and commerce, and refocus its attention on customer service issues.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* The Committee's oversight of the financial condition of the airline industry and passenger service will focus on improving the passenger experience without burdensome requirements that will harm the overall efficiency of the airline industry, raise consumer prices, or cost jobs.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION**

### **Coast Guard Budget**

The Coast Guard is currently functioning under a continuing resolution for fiscal year 2011 which expires March 4, 2011. The continuing resolution provides funding for all Coast Guard accounts and activities at the FY 2010 level. In October 2010, the House and Senate passed and the President signed into law H.R. 3619, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 which authorized \$10.2 billion for the Service in FY 2011.

In the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Subcommittee will hold hearings on the President's FY 2012 and 2013 budget requests and consider legislation to authorize the Coast Guard.

The Subcommittee will explore ways to implement cost savings at the Service by leveraging efficiencies and eliminating waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* The taxpayer benefits from the Coast Guard's work include a professional service of those trained in protecting lives and property at sea, and securing our borders against drugs, terrorists and illegal aliens.

### **Coast Guard Acquisition**

The Coast Guard is currently undergoing a major recapitalization of its offshore operating assets. The recapitalization is intended to replace or modernize more than 90 ships and 200 aircraft, as well as replace outdated command, control, and communications systems. Failure to update these systems increases operating costs and reduces program efficiency. The recapitalization is facing serious challenges related to schedule, budget, and engineering.

The Coast Guard has failed to develop a recapitalization program that reflects the current budget environment, and continues to pursue a plan not supported by either Administration budget requests or Congressional appropriations.

The Coast Guard has increased maritime homeland security operational requirements, as well as maintenance and repair costs associated with rapidly deteriorating legacy assets. Unfortunately, just as legacy assets are deteriorating at increasing rates and jeopardizing readiness, some new assets being acquired under the recapitalization program have proved unworkable or have been delayed due to lack of funds.

The recapitalization program has also had several successes, including major upgrades to the Coast Guard's search and rescue helicopters, the acquisition of a new class of ocean going cutters, and design and ongoing construction of a new class of near-shore cutters. Despite these successes, the Subcommittee remains concerned with the escalating costs of the program, the mission readiness failure of existing assets, and the lack of a realistic recapitalization plan.

In the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Subcommittee will continue to closely review the Coast Guard's recapitalization program, as well as any changes to the program which may be necessary to ensure the men and women of the Coast Guard who risk their lives for the Nation have the best equipment possible at the best price for the American taxpayers.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* The taxpayer will benefit through lower, more predictable acquisition costs as a result of a realistic recapitalization plan.

### **Mission Balance**

The Subcommittee remains concerned about the balance of resources and assets used for the Service's homeland and non-homeland security missions. Since September

11, 2001, the Coast Guard has received increased resources to carry out homeland security missions, including ports, waterways, and coastal security and migrant interdiction. The Subcommittee is concerned that the everyday safety missions of the Coast Guard, including search and rescue, vessel inspections, and mariner licensing, also receive adequate resources.

The Coast Guard must assure the safety, as well as the security, of the Nation's maritime commerce every day. Failure to provide adequate resources to the Coast Guard's marine safety program is as much of a threat to the United States' economic interests as failure to provide adequate resources for maritime security.

In the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Subcommittee will conduct oversight of the Coast Guard's mission balance to ensure the Service maintains the necessary resources and expertise to successfully conduct each of its critical missions.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* The taxpayer will benefit from the prevention of loss of life and property at sea, as well as from savings in the expense of accident response and clean-up.

### **Maritime Domain Awareness**

In order to prevent accidents, protect U.S. borders and effectively respond to incidents in the waters under the control of the United States, the Coast Guard must maintain Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA). In other words, the Service must know the location and mission of ships operating in U.S. waters and such other background information as weather, tides and currents. MDA requires access to many sources of data, including visual observations, weather predictions, long-range vessel tracking information and data provided by vessel-based transponders similar to those used by aircraft. The integration of these data sources into a "Common Operating Picture" shared by shore-side facilities, ships and aircraft, forms the basis of the Coast Guard's future plans to deploy its assets more wisely and cost effectively while also improving safety and security of our maritime transportation system.

The Coast Guard relies on several new and developing technologies to assist in implementing MDA. The Subcommittee has been concerned with delays in fielding these new technologies, cost overruns, the development of seemingly duplicative systems, performance failures, and poor contract management. The Subcommittee is also concerned the plans for implementing MDA may not represent the best strategy to prevent maritime safety and security incidents and may come at an unacceptable cost to the government and the users of the maritime transportation system.

In the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Subcommittee will continue its oversight of the Service's development and implementation of MDA to ensure the best system is fielded in a timely manner and at the best price for the American taxpayers.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* The taxpayer will benefit by reduced operating cost of Coast Guard ships and aircraft, as well as increased efficiency in commercial vessel movements.

## **Oil Spill Prevention and Response**

The loss of 11 lives in the explosion and sinking of the *Deepwater Horizon* was a tremendous tragedy. The environmental cleanup continues and economic consequences of the unprecedented oil spill are still being calculated.

On May 22, 2010, the President established the National Commission on the BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and Deepwater Drilling to investigate the cause of the incident and provide recommendations to prevent future spills. The Commission released its recommendations on January 11, 2011. These recommendations, coupled with the findings of the joint Coast Guard/Department of Interior investigation into the incident, which will be released by April 2011, will help inform the Subcommittee on what changes to the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 and other laws are needed to prevent future spills.

The Subcommittee will continue oversight of this issue in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress to ensure the Nation's oil spill prevention and response capabilities protect human lives and the environment while protecting U.S. jobs. The Subcommittee will work to provide responsible environmental and occupational safeguards while ensuring access to domestic energy resources and protecting vital energy sector jobs.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* The taxpayer will benefit from improved prevention and liability schemes through reduced economic loss as a result of a spill and reduced spending on response and cleanup activities.

## **Short Sea Shipping**

Short sea shipping is the waterborne movement of commercial freight between two ports in the United States. At the present time, the most highly developed water freight transportation systems in the United States operate on the Mississippi River, the Great Lakes, and the St. Lawrence Seaway and often carry agricultural products and other raw materials. However, the Maritime Administration has found these routes are carrying only about 13 percent of total freight tonnage in the United States. By comparison, nearly 70 percent of the freight tonnage transported in the United States is moved by trucks travelling across our Nation's roadways.

The revitalization of our marine highways represents a cost effective and efficient mode of transportation that has the potential to create new maritime industry jobs for Americans. The Subcommittee will examine ways to expand the use of short sea shipping in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress.

*Benefits to the taxpayer:* The taxpayer will benefit by gaining increased cargo carrying capacity in the transportation system without incurring the large costs associated with new highway construction.

## **Piracy**

In 2010, pirates in the waters off the Horn of Africa captured 74 commercial vessels and held over 800 merchant seaman hostage. The pirates continue to intensify their attacks and violent tactics on vessels transiting those waters. Pirates are using larger vessels, more advanced weaponry, and traveling further into the Indian Ocean to intercept vessels traveling outside the regular shipping lanes. Ransoms are increasing and reports indicate that conditions for hostages are worsening.

The Subcommittee will continue oversight of piracy in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress. The Subcommittee will work to find ways to improve the security of U.S. seafarers, their vessels, and their cargo as they transit these high risk waters.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Piracy is driving up the price of insurance and other costs associated with the transportation of goods in international commerce. The taxpayer benefits from the more secure transportation of U.S. goods in foreign commerce.

## **Ballast Water and Incidental Discharges**

Due to a Federal court decision, the discharge of ballast water and other “discharges incidental to the normal operation of vessels” such as bilge water, deck wash and air conditioning condensate are now regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency under the Clean Water Act, as well as the Coast Guard under the National Invasive Species Act and an international convention. In addition, over 25 states have put in place regulations to govern ballast water and other incidental discharges. The requirements in some of these states are inconsistent with requirements in other states. This can complicate vessel operations, drive up costs, threaten jobs, and impede the flow of commerce along our coast, Great Lakes, and inland rivers.

The Subcommittee will work with the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee to conduct oversight of this issue in the 112th Congress. The Subcommittee will also work to create a more effective ballast water and incidental discharge program that addresses inconsistent requirements and ensures the efficient movement of maritime commerce, defends seafaring and port jobs, and protects the environment.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* The taxpayer benefits through effective, predictable and, therefore, less expensive regulation of vessel discharges.

## **Vessel Capacity**

As a result of the recent economic recession, Americans purchased less imported goods. As imports slowed, ship owners reduced overall cargo carrying capacity by taking such actions as removing ships from service. This caused delays in shipping and drove up costs for importers. In addition, just as vessel capacity was being reduced, the weak American dollar was encouraging the purchase of American-made goods in foreign countries, increasing export demand. With reductions in vessel capacity those wishing to export U.S. goods had difficulty securing containers and vessel space to ship their goods to foreign customers.

As the economy showed signs of recovery and imports grew in 2010, vessel capacity was restored. The Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) conducted an investigation into the matter and recently released its findings and recommendations. The Subcommittee will continue to conduct oversight of vessel capacity issues in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress to ensure U.S. manufacturers have the access to foreign markets they need to expand their businesses and hire new workers.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* The taxpayer benefits by having sufficient cargo carrying capacity to meet the United States' foreign trade needs. This makes imports more affordable, and U.S. exports more competitive.

## **FMC and MARAD Budget**

The Subcommittee has jurisdiction over the FMC and the non-defense related programs of the Maritime Administration (MARAD). The FMC is responsible for the economic regulation of waterborne foreign commerce and unfair shipping practices. MARAD oversees several programs related to defense readiness, as well as programs designed to promote and develop the domestic merchant marine industry. Both agencies are operating under a FY 2011 continuing resolution which expires March 4, 2011. In FY 2010, these agencies had a combined budget of over \$387 million.

The Subcommittee will continue to conduct oversight of the FMC and MARAD in the 112th Congress. The Subcommittee will explore ways to promote job growth in the domestic fleet while reducing costs at both agencies.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* The taxpayer benefits by making sure these agencies spend their limited resources wisely.

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT**

**Federal Courthouses**

In June of 2010, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report on the federal courthouse program and found that of the 33 courthouses built since 2000, there was 3.56 million square feet of extra space, costing the taxpayer \$835 million plus \$51 million annually to operate and maintain. In August of 2010, the Subcommittee sent a letter to President Obama that detailed the findings of the GAO study and the results of the Subcommittee's investigation into the courthouse program and requested that the Administration place a moratorium on new courthouses until the Subcommittee could ensure the courthouse program was appropriately reformed to address overbuilding. The Subcommittee will continue its oversight of the authorization of new federal courthouses, encourage the full implementation of courtroom sharing formulae, and place strict requirements on any proposed courthouses to minimize overbuilding and reduce costs. The Subcommittee will also closely oversee the progress made on courthouses already authorized to ensure they are constructed within the limitations placed upon them by the Committee and to ensure they stay below or within budget.

The Committee has long championed greater Federal ownership of office space assets for which long-term Federal needs exist, rather than long-term leasing. Over the past two decades, the General Services Administration's (GSA) scarce capital resources have been siphoned off principally to build Federal courthouses that are not needed or significantly overbuilt. GAO reports that the funds expended on the unneeded space would have been sufficient to build nine average-size courthouses. It is clear that, if these funds had been available to construct or purchase other Federal office buildings, these capital resources would have made an appreciable contribution toward Federal ownership of long-term assets. The Committee should ensure that courthouse construction projects include credible judgeship projections; courtroom sharing in a robust and efficient fashion in accordance with the empirical courtroom use data collected by the Federal Judicial Center; and faithful adherence by GSA to congressionally authorized square-footage limitations, as well as dollar limitations, when executing projects.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Effective oversight of the courthouse program will save money by cutting the costs of courthouses and stopping the building of courthouses that are unneeded; shrink government by requiring the consolidation and reduction of the space needed; and create jobs through the building of those courthouses that are necessary.

**General Services Administration Broker Contracts**

On October 4, 2004, the General Services Administration (GSA) awarded four contracts as a part of its national brokerage program. Under this program, GSA awarded contracts to four companies to provide brokerage services, including the procurement of

leased space for the federal government. Due to mergers, there are now three companies providing these services. The Subcommittee will continue to closely examine the program's implementation, including how GSA will address some of the weaknesses in the program identified by the Subcommittee, the GSA Inspector General, and the GAO. The broker contractors have been tasked with managing a portion of GSA's leasing portfolio which has resulted in significantly lower lease costs for taxpayers. However, over that same period, GSA's in-house overhead costs of managing leases have increased. The Subcommittee intends to conduct oversight of GSA's overhead costs, why there has been an increase despite a smaller workload, and review ways the brokers could be more effectively used to lower those costs.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Better use of the broker contracts will cut spending in the form of overhead as well as through the reduced rent payments realized through use of the contractors, shrink government, and create jobs by producing more available work for the private sector.

### **Real Property Management**

The management of Federal Real Property has been on the GAO's *High Risk* list since 2003 due to a number of mismanagement issues including the overreliance on costly leasing to meet long-term space needs and underused or vacant space. In addition, with nearly half of GSA's assets over 50 years old, GSA has faced challenges maintaining a balanced inventory, draining federal resources and costing more to maintain old buildings that are often inefficient. At the same time, GSA continues to over-rely on expensive new commercial leases that very often result in the taxpayer paying for a building several times over without any ownership interest. Office of Management and Budget budget scorekeeping rules are key drivers on "own vs. lease" asset decision-making. Current budget scorekeeping rules generally leave GSA with only two options for meeting the Federal Government's general purpose space needs: direct appropriations for new construction or long-term leases.

The Subcommittee will continue to conduct investigations and oversight of GSA's management of its real property portfolio and examine ways to ensure cost-effective choices are made in approving leasing versus construction or purchase. In addition, the Subcommittee will work to ensure GSA maximizes the utilization of existing space, renegotiates existing leases to reduce costs, and sells under-used or vacant properties which will generate revenue. Finally, the Subcommittee will work to ensure GSA fully utilizes its enhanced property management authority to make better use of space it retains, such as out-leasing empty federal space to generate income for the Federal Buildings Fund and help offset costs.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Better management of real property will reduce spending and lower costs by cutting waste, result in the shrinking of government through streamlining the bureaucracy in GSA's processes, and create private-sector jobs through GSA's acquisition, construction, leasing and building management activities.

## **Federal Buildings Fund**

Congress established GSA's Federal Buildings Fund (FBF) with the intent of making GSA's management of space self-financed. Federal agencies who are tenants in GSA-owned or managed facilities, generally, pay rent to GSA for use of the space. Those funds are deposited into the FBF which then is used to reinvest in GSA's assets – for repairs and maintenance, as well as for construction or purchasing of new property. With nearly half of GSA's assets over 50 years old coupled with the increase in commercial leasing to fill space needs, serious questions have been raised regarding the viability of the FBF in the future. Old assets drain the resources of the FBF in repair and maintenance costs. The Subcommittee will conduct oversight and hold hearings on how GSA can right-size its portfolio and other steps GSA can take to ensure the viability of the FBF, which will help offset the need for new spending.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Shoring up the FBF will result in lower spending by making the FBF truly self-sufficient without need for additional appropriations; shrink government through better management of the FBF, which will result in lower administrative costs; and create jobs through the activities funded by the FBF.

## **Leasing Authorities of Other Agencies**

While GSA is considered the landlord for the civilian federal agencies, there are other federal agencies that have their own statutory authorities to secure space for their agency needs. Over the years, however, some of the agencies have mismanaged their authorities, resulting in wasteful spending and unjustifiable commitments. For example, in August, it was reported that the Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) signed one the largest federal leases in a decade for 900,000 square feet of space and just four months later it turned around and reported 600,000 square feet of that space as excess (unnecessary). The Subcommittee intends to investigate and review the independent property authorities of other agencies, like the SEC, and examine ways to stop actions that result in such massive waste.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Stopping the wasteful use of these authorities by other agencies will lower spending by avoiding misguided financial obligations; shrink government by ensuring the administrative costs due to these functions are centralized and streamlined; and create jobs by making the federal process more streamlined and understandable for the private sector to compete in providing space to federal agencies.

## **Capital Investment and Leasing Program (CILP)**

As part of the Committee's annual work to review and authorize GSA's requests for authority to repair, alter, construct and lease property for use by federal agencies, the Subcommittee will review each prospectus presented to the Committee and recommend approval only after the Subcommittee is satisfied that the requests are cost-effective and in the best interest of the government.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* A more thorough review of the CILP projects will reduce spending by stopping unneeded projects and leases; shrink government through approval of only those projects that are necessary; and save and create jobs through the projects that are approved.

### **Federal Protective Service**

As a part of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, the Federal Protective Service (FPS) was transferred from the Public Buildings Service of GSA to the Department of Homeland Security. However, responsibility for the protection of federal buildings, generally, remains with the GSA. The Subcommittee will continue to monitor and review the policies, procedures and requirements of security at public buildings, including a review of the implementation of these policies, procedures and requirements of the FPS.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Effective management of the FPS and its contract guard program will help reduce costs by ensuring building security costs are properly managed; shrink government through the effective use and training of the private contract guards; and save and create more jobs in the private sector through better leveraging of the private contract guard program.

### **Homeland Security Headquarters**

The construction of the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) headquarters is a multi-billion dollar federal construction project that, when completed, will relocate much of DHS operations in the D.C. area into one campus located at the historic St. Elizabeths Hospital site in Southeast D.C. Currently, the construction of the Coast Guard headquarters is underway at the site. In addition, various DHS components remain in leased space until the phased construction is completed. The Subcommittee plans to continue close oversight of this major project and its associated leases to guard against waste, and ensure jobs are maintained and/or created accordingly throughout the project.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Strong oversight of this massive building project will lower spending by minimizing cost overruns and, over time, transfer agencies currently paying high rental rates into government-owned space which has been shown to produce savings over the long-term; shrink the size and footprint of DHS; and generate jobs in the construction process and spur economic growth in a distressed area.

### **Architect of the Capitol**

The Subcommittee will continue ongoing oversight of projects being undertaken by the Architect of the Capitol (AOC), including redevelopment of the Federal Office Building 8, garage renovations, as well as other development pursuant to the Master Plan for the Capitol Complex. Consistent oversight will ensure proper prioritization and cost savings.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Strong oversight of the AOC projects will lower costs by minimizing cost over-runs and stopping projects that are unneeded; shrink government by ensuring AOC building processes are streamlined; and save and create jobs as the projects are undertaken.

### **Smithsonian Institution Facilities**

The Subcommittee will continue its oversight of projects undertaken by the Smithsonian Institution including the acquisition, construction and use of local and remote museum, research and storage facilities of the Institution. The Subcommittee will continue to ensure the cost-effective solutions to the Smithsonian's space needs such as leveraging private dollars and disposal or effective reuse of underused assets.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Oversight of the Institution's projects will lower spending by ensuring projects are appropriate and leveraged with nonfederal dollars; shrink government through maintaining lower administrative costs; and save or create jobs as the projects are undertaken.

### **John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**

As a part of its ongoing oversight of the Kennedy Center's programs, the Subcommittee will regularly review the construction, alteration and modernization activities of the Kennedy Center that are conducted using federal funds to ensure appropriate management and cost savings.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Reviewing the activities of the Kennedy Center will lower spending by ensuring capital investments are appropriate and within budget, and create jobs through those projects.

### **Economic Development Administration**

The authorization legislation for the Economic Development Administration (EDA) expired in FY 2008. EDA was created in 1965 by the Public Works and Economic Development Act to leverage federal funding to help spur economic growth in areas that are experiencing: chronic high unemployment, out-migration, and severe economic dislocations due to plant closings and natural disasters. Over the years, EDA's programs have generated new, permanent jobs with minimal federal investment. For example, reviews of EDA's programs have revealed that its programs, on average, create jobs at a cost of \$4,000 per job. In addition, studies have shown that \$1 invested by EDA attracts \$11 in private or other public funding. The leveraging of federal dollars ensures that projects funded are viable and include a private interest that will ensure the jobs created are long-lasting. In preparation for EDA's reauthorization, the Subcommittee will continue to oversee EDA programs to ensure they continue to leverage private dollars and create jobs. The Subcommittee will also identify and remove regulatory stovepipes that add costs and administrative hurdles to job creation.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Oversight will reduce spending by consolidating and streamlining administrative costs and economic development functions, shrink government through those streamlining activities, and create jobs by ensuring EDA's programs effectively leverage private investment and other funding to spur targeted economic development that creates jobs.

### **Appalachian Regional Commission**

The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) will be due for reauthorization in FY 2012. The Subcommittee will closely examine the activities of the ARC including how it meets the needs of distressed counties in Appalachia, how it uses new and innovative ways to promote economic development, and its track record of success since its last reauthorization to ensure, as with EDA, projects funded result in economic growth and job creation.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Oversight of ARC's programs will create jobs by ensuring ARC's programs effectively fulfill its job creating mission and leverage non-ARC funds.

### **Other Regional Economic Development Authorities**

The Subcommittee will closely examine the activities of the other established development authorities, which are the Denali Commission, Delta Regional Authority, Northern Great Plains Regional Authority, Southeast Crescent Regional Commission, Southwest Border Regional Commission, and Northern Border Regional Commission. The Subcommittee will review these commissions and identify ways to streamline these programs and reduce any overlap to produce cost savings.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* A thorough review of these commissions, particularly the newer commissions, will lower spending by the reduction and elimination of duplication and streamlining administrative costs; shrink government through the reduction and elimination of duplication; and create jobs through the economic development programs supported by the commissions.

### **Emergency Management**

The Subcommittee intends to undertake a review and assessment of the Nation's ability to prevent, prepare for, mitigate against, respond to, and recover from disasters and emergencies of all types including terrorism. In particular, the Subcommittee will review and conduct oversight of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) hazard mitigation programs. Ensuring effective mitigation programs will reduce costs in future disasters. Studies have shown that for every \$1 invested in mitigation \$3 is saved in future disaster costs and lives are saved. In addition, the Subcommittee will examine ways FEMA can streamline its disaster assistance programs to minimize costs and ensure communities impacted by disasters can quickly recover – saving jobs and reducing increased costs due to delayed recovery.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Reviewing and assessing FEMA’s mitigation and disaster programs will lower spending by ensuring effective investment in mitigation projects and a streamlined approach to disaster response; shrink government by reducing the bureaucracy through the streamlined approaches; and create jobs by ensuring communities hit by disasters can quickly recover.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT**

### **Streamlining Project Delivery**

According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, highway and transit projects today can take from ten to 15 years from the beginning planning stages to completion of construction.—with up to six of those years for the environmental review process. Time delays and inefficiencies in project delivery not only postpone needed improvements in our nation’s transportation infrastructure but also result in increases in the cost of projects. Tom Skancke, Commissioner with the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, testified before the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee that if you add one Federal dollar to a transportation project you stretch the time frame for that project’s completion by seven to ten years. The Subcommittee will evaluate the project delivery process to determine what improvements can be made to existing rules and regulations governing project delivery in order to expedite the delivery process for all projects and save the American taxpayer money.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Streamlining the project delivery process will save time and lead to cost savings, eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy redundancies, and save and create jobs through the projects that are constructed.

### **Program Consolidation and Elimination**

DOT currently administers more than 100 highway, transit, and highway safety programs. Many of these programs serve similar purposes and several of them are no longer necessary because the nature of our transportation system has changed over time. The Committee will continue its work and hold hearings to identify programs that serve duplicative purposes so they can be consolidated and to identify programs that are no longer needed so they can be eliminated.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Program consolidation and elimination will reduce the number of programs administered by DOT, thereby reducing the size of government and eliminating unnecessary bureaucracy.

## **Redefining the Federal Role in Surface Transportation**

Over the past 50 years the Federal surface transportation programs have grown in both size and scope. In administering the programs, DOT lacks a strategic focus in managing the over 100 highway, transit, and highway safety programs, and the roles of the various Federal, state and local agencies responsible for delivering surface transportation projects and programs is often times unclear. The Committee will evaluate what role the Federal government should play in surface transportation and how best to address the current surface transportation challenges the nation faces, including what types of projects should be paid for with Federal funds and the impacts Federal transportation policies and regulations have on decisions made at the State and local level.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Focusing Federal surface transportation funding and policy on projects and priorities that are in the Federal interest will allow us to reduce the size of the Federal government.

## **Performance and Accountability**

Currently, Federal surface transportation programs lack transparency, accountability, and performance oversight metrics. There are no requirements for States DOTs, localities, or public transit agencies to develop transportation plans with specific performance objectives. The Committee will continue to explore opportunities to develop a performance management approach that increases the transparency and accountability of how Federal surface transportation funds are used, and delivers the best value for taxpayers.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Including performance measurements in surface transportation programs and increasing the transparency and accountability of Federal surface transportation programs will ensure that recipients are using these funds in a cost effective manner to meet national surface transportation objectives and delivers the best value to taxpayers.

## **Innovative Financing**

Revenue deposited into the Highway Trust Fund is not keeping up with our highway and transit infrastructure needs. As a result we are going to need to find ways to do more with less. The Committee will continue its work to determine the proper role that innovative financing tools and private investment will play in financing surface transportation projects. The Committee will also evaluate the extent to which States and localities are already using innovative techniques to finance projects, including but not limited to bonding, loan programs and public private partnerships. The Committee will also investigate the extent to which States and localities have the fiscal capacity to take advantage of these innovative financing options.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Use of innovative financing methods will better leverage our existing revenues and provide expanded options available to finance transportation projects, allowing the taxpayers' money to go farther.

### **Oversight of Idle Surface Transportation Funding**

States and transit agencies have billions of dollars in unobligated surface transportation funding sitting idle due to projects that have been delayed, completed or are no longer viable. Hundreds of millions of dollars in funding is sitting idle at DOT because some programs no longer need the funding that is appropriated for them. Building on the Committee's efforts in the last Congress to rescind unnecessary funding, the Committee will quantify the amount of funding that is tied up in cancelled or delayed surface transportation projects and determine what actions need to be taken to put this funding to better use. The Committee will also identify programs that receive funding they are no longer able to use and propose that funding for those programs either be reduced or eliminated.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* By taking action to make better use of idle surface transportation funding, the Committee will ensure this funding is put toward projects and programs that will create jobs and identify areas where spending can be cut.

### **Transit Safety Oversight**

The Subcommittee will conduct oversight on the current State-managed safety oversight program for fixed guideway transit systems. Statistically, rail transit is the safest mode of transportation, with fewer accidents and deaths each year than any other mode. However, there have been some high profile rail transit accidents resulting in fatalities and injuries around the country in recent years, and in response, the Administration has proposed federalizing transit safety oversight activities at the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Although transit systems have received federal support since 1964, mostly through capital grants, transit services are intrinsically a local responsibility. The FTA is a grant making agency, and does not have the expertise or the underlying authority to directly oversee local transit agency operations. In fact, DOT is expressly prohibited in statute from regulating the operations of transit systems. The Subcommittee is committed to improving the safety of rail transit operations, but this must be done by strengthening the existing State Safety Oversight program, not by expanding the size and scope of the federal bureaucracy.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Effective oversight of rail transit systems and State Safety Oversight programs can improve the safety of rail transit, which is already the safest mode of transportation. By strengthening and improving the current State-managed system, rather than expanding the size of the FTA and giving it broader authority, the size of the government will be kept under control and the cost of bureaucracy will not be further increased.

## **New Starts**

The Subcommittee will conduct oversight on the FTA's management of the New Starts program, to identify ways in which the lengthy process of moving a new fixed guideway transit project through project development and into construction can be accelerated and streamlined. As transit projects languish in the New Starts approval pipeline the total cost of those projects increases. The Committee will identify ways in which these projects can move more quickly through the New Starts approval process, while ensuring that these projects are worthy of federal funding.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Effective oversight of the New Starts process that identifies ways to speed up and streamline project development will directly save taxpayer money on the ultimate cost of the project, and will address congestion and mobility needs faster.

## **Oversight of Major Surface Transportation Projects**

The Subcommittee will conduct oversight on major highway and transit construction projects that have experienced significant cost overruns, to determine how such overruns can be avoided and identify strategies to ensure responsible business practices and equitable sharing of risk. A 2003 Government Accountability Office reported that half of the federal highway projects it examined had cost overruns of more than 25 percent. Over the past few years the cost of several high profile major transit construction projects have doubled or tripled when compared to their original cost estimate. As a result, project sponsors have had to redesign or change the scope of projects or in some cases cancel the project after work has already begun. The Subcommittee will investigate these cost overruns to determine if they are due to changes in the construction market, project mismanagement, or other cause.

*Benefits to the taxpayer:* Effective oversight of construction costs of large surface transportation projects will save taxpayer money and help needed infrastructure projects get built on time and on budget.

## **Hours of Service**

Since 1937, the Federal Government has set limits on the number of hours commercial drivers may be on duty and spend behind the wheel, in order to promote the safety of truck and bus operations. On January 4, 2003, in response to a Congressional mandate enacted in 1995, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) published new hours-of-service (HOS) regulations for all property-carrying interstate motor carrier operators. The HOS rules have been the subject of ongoing litigation since 2003. On December 29, 2010, FMCSA issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking proposing revisions to the HOS requirements. The trucking industry has raised concerns that the proposed changes are overly complex, potentially reducing productivity. Law enforcement personnel have questioned whether the rules will require additional training for effective enforcement. The Subcommittee will maintain close oversight of the

rulemaking process to ensure it furthers FMCSA's primary mission of safety, while ensuring the efficient movement of freight throughout the U.S. economy.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Effective oversight of the HOS rules will save money by ensuring that the rule provides for safety while not unnecessarily impeding productivity.

### **Cross-Border Trucking**

In 1982, Congress prohibited Mexican trucking companies from operating in the United States beyond the commercial zone, a three to 20 miles wide zone along the U.S.-Mexican border. In 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement liberalized access for cross-border trucking between the United States and Mexico. In 2007, the Bush Administration launched a cross-border demonstration program to allow approved Mexican carriers to operate beyond the commercial zone, with a similar program allowing U.S. trucks to travel beyond Mexico's commercial zone. The demonstration program was terminated in 2009 pursuant to of a funding prohibition in the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009. In response to the termination of the demonstration program, Mexico imposed sanctions on certain U.S. manufactured and agricultural exports to Mexico. On January 7, 2011, DOT released a concept document to resume a long-haul, cross-border Mexican trucking program with a few modifications to the 2007 demonstration program to address some of the concerns raised by Members of Congress and stakeholder groups. The Subcommittee will maintain close oversight of the implications of DOT's proposal to guard against waste, ensure the safety of truck traffic coming across the U.S.-Mexico border, and to ensure that American jobs are maintained or created.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Effective oversight of DOT's proposal to resume cross-border trucking will help reduce costs by ensuring that, if the program moves forward, implementation is properly managed, and an agreement between the U.S. and Mexico will lead to American job creation.

### **Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) Program**

FMCSA identified limitations in its compliance and enforcement model both in how safety is measured and how unsafe behaviors are corrected. On December 13, 2010, FMCSA launched its new Compliance, Safety, Accountability (CSA) Program, which uses existing safety data collected by FMCSA and State agencies to better target enforcement activities at truck and bus companies that have a history of safety violations. FMCSA believes that CSA will allow them to "do more with less" by identifying high risk companies, focusing resources where they are most needed, and improving the safety records of those companies. The Subcommittee will continue to evaluate CSA to ensure that implementation of the program is effective and meets these objectives.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Successful implementation of CSA will: improve safety on our roads, benefiting all highway users; save money by targeting enforcement

activities on high risk companies; maximize FMCSA's existing enforcement resources; and allow companies with good safety practices and performance to avoid unnecessary audits of their records.

### **Highway Safety and Traffic Fatalities and Injuries.**

According to the Federal Highway Administration, the average cost of a roadway fatality is \$3,246,192 and the average cost of a roadway injury is \$68,170. The Subcommittee will monitor the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's (NHTSA) and the Federal Highway Administration's efforts to improve highway safety.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Several new highway safety programs were created in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users that have not been fully utilized by DOT or by the States. By identifying highway safety programs that are underutilized or ineffective, Congress can focus funding on programs and activities that will reduce fatalities and injuries.

### **Innovative Technologies**

The Subcommittee will provide oversight on the development and demonstration of new transportation technologies that improve efficiency and safety on our Nation's highways and transit systems. Research in this area will help create jobs by encouraging development of sophisticated technologies that many State DOTs and localities could implement on their roads, transit systems and bridges. Implementation of these technologies can improve operational performance of surface transportation networks, allowing us to get better use of the existing capacity on our roads and transit systems.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Effective oversight of the development and demonstration of emerging innovative transportation technologies will provide State DOTs and localities tools to aid in addressing congestion and safety issues on their surface transportation systems. This can play an important role in improving a region's productivity, and can stimulate growth and create jobs in the advanced transportation technology industry.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE ON RAILROADS, PIPELINES AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

### **Railroad Infrastructure Programs**

The Subcommittee will review and hold hearings on DOT's implementation of rail infrastructure programs authorized in the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA). The Subcommittee will focus on the Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing (RRIF) direct and guaranteed loan program for rail and rail-intermodal infrastructure projects. The Subcommittee will examine the RRIF loan program to identify necessary improvements to encourage more utilization of the program. Of the \$35 billion in loan authority authorized under the RRIF program, the

Department has only \$400 million in current outstanding loans. In calendar year 2010, two loans were approved.

The Subcommittee will also examine DOT's implementation of two new capital grant programs authorized in PRIIA, the intercity passenger rail service grants to states, and the high-speed rail corridor development grants. These programs were appropriated a total of \$10.5 billion in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act ("Stimulus") and the FY 2010 Consolidated Appropriations Act, greatly exceeding the authorized funding levels under PRIIA. Under both the Stimulus and the FY 2010 appropriations bill, funds were provided under a consolidated program called "High-Speed and Intercity Passenger Rail Grants", rather than separately providing funding to the two intercity passenger rail programs authorized in PRIIA. These two programs have different goals and benefits, and by consolidating the grants, the distinction between the two programs was lost. Although the program is often spoken of as the "high-speed rail program", only two projects funded under the consolidated program are truly high-speed, as defined under the PRIIA authorization.

A clear omission in the two passenger rail grant programs established under PRIIA is the role of the private sector in providing financing and project management expertise. Under PRIIA, only States and Amtrak are eligible to receive Federal grants to develop high-speed and intercity passenger rail. However, other passenger rail lines around the world are built and operated through public-private partnerships, and this model should be incorporated into the U.S. passenger rail network and development of high-speed rail. PRIIA created a process for DOT to issue a request for proposals for private interests to finance design, construct, operate, and maintain high-speed service in dedicated corridors or the Northeast Corridors. According to the DOT, eight private-interest proposals were submitted.

The Subcommittee will conduct oversight of these passenger rail programs, and will hold hearings to determine how best to reform and improve these capital grants and loan programs in order to ensure that cost-effective and successful rail projects are selected, funded and implemented.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Effective oversight of the rail infrastructure programs will focus federal funds on projects that make sense, are strongly supported by the States they serve, and generate important benefits such as congestion relief on the highways and in the air and economic development around stations; save taxpayer money by encouraging private sector participation in financing, building and operating high-speed and passenger rail projects; and create jobs through construction of freight and passenger rail projects, operating new rail services, building equipment and rail cars, and improving capacity for more effective freight and passenger transportation on a national basis.

## **Amtrak**

Capital and operating grants for Amtrak, the national passenger rail operator, were reauthorized in PRIIA for the first time since the Amtrak Reform and

Accountability Act of 1997. A number of improvements to Amtrak management were incorporated in the PRIIA authorization, including:

- requiring Amtrak to establish an improved financial accounting system;
- requiring Amtrak to prepare and submit to Congress a transparent 5-year financial plan on which the annual budget and business plan for each fiscal year would be based;
- requiring the development, in cooperation with host freight rail lines, of a standard set of metrics by which to measure Amtrak's performance and service quality;
- requiring the development of a performance improvement plan for Amtrak's long-distance routes;
- establishing the Northeast Corridor Advisory Commission to coordinate Amtrak's operations in the multi-state corridor and to evaluate options and make recommendations for future passenger rail improvements; and
- requiring the development and implementation of improved Amtrak's on-board services such as food and beverage service.

In addition to these internal management reforms, PRIIA included two provisions that open the operation of intercity passenger rail service to competition. The first provision creates a pilot program whereby two of Amtrak's current intercity routes can be operated by a freight railroad. The second provision established an open request for proposals process for entities other than Amtrak to bid for contracts to design, build, operate, maintain and finance high-speed rail corridors designated under the law. The Subcommittee will conduct oversight and hold hearings on Amtrak's and the Federal Railroad Administration's implementation of the required reforms in PRIIA, and will seek input on how Amtrak can be a more efficient and effective steward of federal taxpayer dollars.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Oversight of reforms required of Amtrak will ensure that taxpayer dollars allocated to the railroad are spent responsibly and effectively. Pushing DOT to fully implement the competition provisions included in PRIIA and looking for new ways to encourage competition will save taxpayer money and improve Amtrak services.

## **Rail Safety Programs**

Federal railroad safety laws were recently reauthorized in the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 (RSIA). The Subcommittee will conduct oversight and hold hearings on the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) efforts to implement this new authorization, including the agency's regulatory response to the RSIA's mandate to implement Positive Train Control systems by December 31, 2015, on rail routes carrying passengers or certain poison or toxic-by-inhalation hazardous materials.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Effective oversight of FRA's implementation of new rail safety laws will help ensure an appropriate balance between commerce and safety,

keeping costs of goods lower for consumers and businesses healthy as our economy recovers from the recession.

### **Pipeline Safety**

The Subcommittee will hold oversight hearings to evaluate the proper level of staffing in the Office of Pipeline Safety at the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), to discuss the proper balance between State and Federal regulation of the pipeline industry, and to review the level of federal pipeline safety fees paid by pipeline operators and what those fees are used for.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Effective oversight of PHMSA's pipeline safety programs will help ensure the safe transportation of liquid and gas energy commodities, including oil, other petroleum products, and natural gas, without unnecessarily restricting the pipeline industry and driving up energy costs for consumers.

### **Hazardous Materials Safety**

The Subcommittee will conduct oversight and hold hearings to prepare for reauthorization of the Hazardous Materials Safety programs administered by PHMSA. The current authorization for these programs expired on September 30, 2008. The Subcommittee will pay particular attention to the agency's special permits and approvals program to ensure that the program is run effectively and with transparency, so that hazardous materials shippers and carriers clearly understand the processes by which they are regulated. The Subcommittee will also look closely at PHMSA's regulations, to ensure a proper balance between cost and benefit is achieved, and unnecessary restrictions are not placed on commerce unless clearly indicated by a documented safety deficit.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Effective oversight of PHMSA's hazardous materials safety programs will help ensure the safe transportation of materials that are needed in every form of agriculture, manufacturing, health care, and almost every major sector of the U.S. economy, without placing unnecessary restrictions on this transportation and thus driving up costs for U.S. businesses and the consumer.

### **Surface Transportation Board**

The Surface Transportation Board (STB) was established on January 1, 1996, by the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act of 1995. This initial authorization expired at the end of FY 1998, and the agency has not been reauthorized since. The STB is an independent, three-member agency that administers the remaining economic regulation of railroads, including rates, inter-carrier access, abandonments, and mergers, that remained in place after the deregulation embodied in the Staggers Rail Act of 1980. The Subcommittee will conduct oversight to examine the functions of the Board, including the timeliness and effectiveness of its various procedures in hearing cases and making decisions.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Effective oversight of the STB’s economic regulation of railroads will support a balanced regulatory system where shippers are protected against anti-competitive railroad conduct, while railroads can largely decide for themselves how to manage their operations. America’s freight railroads are now the most productive and affordable in the world. Avoiding excessive regulation sustains the economic vitality of the freight railroad industry and keeps goods moving efficiently and cost-effectively.

## **SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **Clean Water Act and Water Infrastructure Programs**

The Subcommittee will conduct oversight of wastewater treatment and water pollution control funding issues, including levels and sources of funding and management of grant and loan programs; wastewater security; and infrastructure needs. Oversight will also include a review of the effectiveness of watershed, market, and performance-based approaches to addressing local water pollution concerns; issues involving the development and implementation of total maximum daily loads, water quality standards, effluent limitations, and permitting; data quality issues; and continued efforts to improve the management of combined and sanitary sewer overflows, stormwater, and nonpoint source pollution. The Subcommittee will investigate whether non-regulatory approaches, such as market-based approaches and other innovative approaches undertaken by State and local governments, may result in greater improvements to the environment. The Subcommittee may review the implications of addressing certain pollutant discharges, including discharges of pesticides, ballast water, incidental discharges from vessels, and water transfers, through traditional Clean Water Act permitting requirements.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Continued improvement of water quality will likely require a combination of regulatory and non-regulatory approaches. The Subcommittee will be focused on finding innovative ways to finance new and replacement of old water infrastructure projects, providing States, counties and towns with additional tools and flexibility to address local environmental challenges, and getting the most for our nation’s limited resources.

### **Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Water Resources Program**

The Subcommittee will review efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization and the management and mission of the civil works program of the Army Corps of Engineers, including the selection, planning, and implementation of water resources projects; financing of harbor and inland waterways infrastructure; and efforts to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and consistent implementation of the agency’s regulatory programs, including those pertaining to wetlands (including the scope and procedural and substantive requirements of the permitting programs) and dredging activities. While the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007 contained provisions intended to streamline the Army Corps of Engineers civil works project

planning process, planning efforts continue to be delayed due to uncoordinated or inefficient reviews or failure to timely resolve disputes during development of these water resources projects.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Continued investments in our nation's infrastructure will create jobs and support a healthy economy. The Subcommittee will focus on getting projects for the nation built more efficiently and cost effectively, thereby more quickly delivering project benefits to the public, while ensuring compliance with existing planning and environmental laws.

### **EPA -- Superfund/CERCLA and Brownfields**

The Subcommittee will review efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the contaminated site cleanup process and the process of assessing natural resources damages (NRD); review the liability, financing, and settlement mechanisms and procedures under the current Superfund program, including implementation of the Small Business Liability Protection Act; review the role of the States in conducting and financing cleanups; review the relationships among the States, EPA, and other Federal entities in implementing the Superfund program; and review ongoing Federal, State, and local efforts to revitalize brownfields, including implementation of the Brownfields Revitalization and Environmental Restoration Act.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Brownfields and Superfund sites drive down property values and tax revenues and are a major blight on many of our cities and towns. The Subcommittee will work to promote state, local, and private efforts to clean up Superfund sites and redevelop brownfields.

### **Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)**

The Subcommittee will review TVA programs, including its energy program and operations in the current marketplace, and the impact of TVA debt on its long-term goals.

*Benefits to the Taxpayer:* Until mid-2006, the Tennessee Valley Authority had made significant payments on its long-term debt in an attempt to reduce its total financing obligations. Since 2006, however, TVA's debt has begun to steadily climb to levels that may place the taxpayer at risk. The Subcommittee will initiate a review of TVA's commitment to long-term financial sustainability to lessen the risk posed to the taxpayer.