

I voted Yes on H.R. 4348, the Surface Transportation Extension Act of 2012, Part II. This legislation extends our nation's highway, transit, and safety programs for an additional 90 days and will serve as the vehicle to begin a formal Conference Committee between the House and Senate to negotiate a new, longer-term reauthorization of these vital programs.

The previous law expired in September of 2009 and has since been running on a series of short-term extensions. We cannot afford to limp along under more extensions and need a new transportation bill signed into law in short order. I particularly pleased that this extension includes sound reforms to expedite project delivery and streamline the environmental review process while maintaining the integrity of our environmental safeguards.

H.R. 4348 also includes language requiring the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to issue a permit for the Keystone XL pipeline within 30 days of receiving an application—a policy which I have consistently supported.

Finally, H.R. 4348 would establish the Gulf Coast Restoration Trust Fund, which would be used to restore the Gulf Coast ecosystem and economy in the aftermath of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon incident. The Trust Fund would be financed with 80 percent of the civil penalties paid by culpable parties in the accident to ensure that the penalties paid are invested where the damage occurred and not used for other purposes or in other areas.

I look forward to working with my colleagues to negotiate a final transportation bill that can be sent to the President for his signature before the end of the current extension.

H.R. 4348 was approved by a vote of 293 - 127.