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November 2015 Monthly Report for MTC

To: Steve Heminger, Executive Director
From: Tom Bulger, President, GRI
Re: Monthly Report for November 2015
Date: November 30, 2015

This month's report is unusually short on activities and actions due to the House and Senate Conference Committee has yet to finalize the differences between the House and Senate versions of H.R.22, the DRIVE Act. Additionally, the Senate failed to move the FY 2016 Transportation – Housing Appropriations Bill H.R. 2257 after two days of debate. The measure was derailed over an amendment related to Syrian refugee policy.

House and Senate Conference Committee on H.R.22

During the week of November 19, a big announcement was predicted for November 20, 2015 on a broad outline deal on the pending surface transportation bill. That announcement did not occur and now we wait for Congress to return from the Thanksgiving break on December 1, 2015.

We have heard that the House and Senate Conferees have agreed to a five-year surface transportation bill versus the Senate's three-year funded bill and the House six-year bill.

To enact a five-year bill the Highway Trust Fund would need \$60.5 billion in General Fund support.

It is very unlikely that the House and Senate Conferees will announce an agreement on December 1 in order to avoid the current December 4, 2015 deadline for the surface transportation program. So look for another short-term extension for about a week.

Senate Abandons FY 16 USDOT Appropriations Bill

During the week of November 20, 2015, the Senate was unsuccessful in moving the FY 2016 Transportation – Housing Appropriations Bill H.R.2257. The FY 2016 spending bill can be beefed up by \$1.6 billion because of the recent budget deal that has \$50 billion additional spending authority. This bill will most likely be reconciled and included in the omnibus appropriations bill at the end of the year.

Coming and Going

Sound Transit in Seattle, Washington hired Peter Rogoff as their next CEO. Mr. Rogoff is the former Federal Transit Administration head and is currently the undersecretary for policy for the U.S. Department of Transportation. He will start in January 2016.