**Policy Details**

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| **Economic Stimulus Update** |
| 02-10-2009 |
| **Senate Passes Economic Stimulus** CONFERENCE NEGOTIATIONS TO BEGIN ALMOST IMMEDIATELY  After more than a week of debate, the Senate has approved its version of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The $838 billion stimulus bill was approved by a final vote of 61-37. The legislation was passed with the support of all democrats and three republicans, Senators Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe of Maine and Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania. The necessary support was largely achieved through the adoption of a compromise amendment, led by Sen. Ben Nelson (D-NE) and Sen. Collins; it cut $108 billion in spending. The House approved its $819 billion stimulus bill on January 28th by a vote of 244-188.  Overall, the two bills are relatively similar in total cost and allocation of funding, but there are some significant priority differences between the two chambers, which may result in difficult negotiations. Conferees on the bill are expected to include Representatives David Obey (D-WI), Henry Waxman (D-CA),  Charles Rangel (D-NY), Jerry Lewis (R-CA), Dave Camp (R-MI) and Senators Daniel Inouye (D-HI), Max Baucus (D-MT), Harry Reid (D-NV), Thad Cochran (R-MS), and Chuck Grassley (R-IA). Concessions will likely have to come from the House, as the current Senate version has only garnered one vote more than necessary to avoid a filibuster. Congress is working under a self-imposed deadline to finish the bill and send it off to the White House before leaving for President’s Day recess. Lawmakers from both sides have expressed optimism about meeting that deadline.  The House and Senate versions of the bill differ by $3.6 billion in funding for public transportation.  When considering the bill last month, the House adopted an amendment to boost transit funding to $12 billion, and though several Senators indicated a need to increase funding, the bill passed in the Senate fell short at $8.4 billion. The Senate funding for public transportation does not support the New Starts program, and the bills also differ in support for high speed rail. The Senate bill includes a $5.5 billion competitive grant program that would focus on larger-scale projects that may take as long as three years to complete. The provision was not included in the House bill, and is opposed by some lawmakers who prefer to funnel money through existing programs.   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **Programs** | **House Bill** | **Senate Bill** | | Highways & Bridges | $30 Billion | $27 Billion | | Transit | $12 Billion | $8.4 Billion | | Amtrak | $800 million | $850 million | | Intercity Passenger Rail Grants | $300 million | $250 million | | High Speed Rail Corridor Investment | No Provision | $2 Billion | | Supplemental Discretionary Grants for National Transportation System (Multi-Modal) | No Provision | $5.5 Billion | | **Other Differences:** | **House Bill** | **Senate Bill** | | Requirements to Obligate 50% of Funding | States-90 days MPOs-75 days | States-180 days | | Suballocation | 55% of highway funding provided to State DOTs directly, 45% allocated through the Surface Transportation Program, of which 62.5% is suballocated to local areas. | 100% of highway funding allocated through the Surface Transportation Program of which 40% of highway funding is suballocated to local areas. | | Funding for Transportation Enhancements | 10 % of suballocated STP funding for TE. Approximately $1.3 billion. | No Provision | |