**Policy Details**

|  |
| --- |
| **Recent Recap and AMPO Updates** |
| 12-15-2008 |
| **Recap on Political Happenings:**  Congress is back at work this week in a lame duck session focusing on legislation to provide aid for Detroit automakers.  It appears that the White House and Congressional leaders are close to reaching a deal on a $15 billion bailout package. There is agreement on the broad parameters of the legislation, which would send $15 billion in short-term emergency loans to U.S. automakers and put one or more presidentially appointed administrators in charge of negotiating a long-term industry restructuring. A provision pushed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., that would prohibit participating automakers from fighting state fuel efficiency regulations is one of the contentious issues that is still being negotiated.  It has been announced that the new Congress will begin work on January 6, in order to prepare a major economic stimulus package by the January 20th inauguration. Congressional Democrats and the Obama team have not put a specific price tag on the stimulus bill though a number of high-ranking lawmakers in both the House and Senate have estimated a cost of at least $500 billion and possibly significantly more. Rumors are out that there may also be a series of stimulus packages over two years with an extension to SAFETEA-LU.  If this is the case, AMPO will seek ways to support revenue to MPOs. Most rumors point to no “policy” changes in the initial stimulus and no earmarks.  Other rumors on the Hill include efforts from some advocate groups looking to offer “out of STIP” projects geared strongly toward reduction of energy usage, and develop more transit and bike/ped projects.   **Efforts AMPO is working on:**  •    Preventing PLANNING FUNDS from being rescinded.  AMPO staff was pleased to deliver and meet with those MPOs Congressional Offices who signed on to our recent letter protecting PL funds. See: [http://www.ampo.org/assets/library/177\_eisaletterwith27signature.pdf](https://www.44fish.com/%7Eampo/policy/Recap%20on%20Political%20Happenings). We are now working to have a Congressional “Dear Colleague” letter circulated to generate additional support on the Hill.   •    As movement towards an economic recovery package continues in Congress, AMPO posted a letter on our homepage ([www.ampo.org](http://www.ampo.org)) written to Congressional leadership urging that transportation funding be allocated through the existing Surface Transportation Program (STP) allocation formula contained in statute. There is debate on the Hill if all monies in the stimulus should go directly to states or through current program formulas.  Of interest to the Transportation Management Areas (TMAs), the Conference of Mayors has created tables comparing STP funds under the current stimulus proposal against current law. |