

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1974 - S.386

This bill sets up a \$11.8 billion Federal mass transit grant program over the six-year period ending in fiscal year 1980. S.386 originally was an unacceptable two-year operating subsidy bill. This bill had passed both Houses of Congress, came out of Conference, and the Conference report was blocked on a very close vote on the House floor.

On October 1, you met with a group of mayors and they pleaded for mass transit legislation this year. You stated that the Administration insisted on a long-term comprehensive bill and that you would continue to oppose the stop-gap effort represented by S.386. Although the House Public Works Committee had reported out a long-term bill which was acceptable in dollars but bad programatically, the Senate had taken no action on a long-term bill. Furthermore, Senate action this year on the long-term bill appeared to be very slim.

After meeting with the mayors, you called Senator Williams and urged him to adopt the Administration's proposal as a substitute to S.386. In less than twenty-four hours, the Conference Committee reported out a revised S.386 which was very close to the Administration's original proposal called Unified Transportation Assistance Program. The major difference was that S.386 does not merge the urban transit and urban highway programs. However, the bill does put out substantial funds by formula and limited funds can be used for operating expenses. Rural transit funds are also provided.

The House Public Works Committee (principally Blatnik, Jones and Harsha) succeeded in mounting enough opposition so that the Rules Committee did not grant a rule before the recess. However, you made several phone calls and the Senate passed S.386 by an overwhelming vote and the House followed suit last week.

Secretary Brinegar and the Administrator of the Urban Mass Transportation Administration, Frank Herringer, are already hard at work developing the regulations to implement this bill.

M. Duval
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