



## MEMORANDUM

TO: Government Affairs Steering Group  
Government Affairs Committee

FROM: ACI-NA Government Affairs

DATE: March 19, 2008

SUBJECT: 1) Overview of FY09 DOT and DHS Appropriations and Budget Resolutions  
2) Congressional Outlook: Aggressive Aviation-Related Agenda Expected in April  
3) Government Affairs Committee To Hold Meeting on May 19th

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### **1) Overview of FY09 DOT and DHS Appropriations, House and Senate Budget Resolutions**

In February, the White House released its Fiscal Year 2009 (FY 09) Budget for both the Department of Transportation (DOT), as well the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The total proposed funding level for DOT is \$57.1 billion dollars, including \$14.6 billion for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Additionally, the Administration proposed \$50.5 billion in funding for DHS, including \$7.1 billion for the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). It is important to remember that the President's Budget plan is only a proposal to Congress. It holds no legislative power, as only the Legislative Branch can appropriate federal dollars.

Thus, ever since the President released his \$3 trillion FY09 Budget proposal, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees, as well as the various authorizing Committees, have been busy holding numerous hearings on funding issues.

During these hearings, many Congressional leaders, including Senate Commerce Committee Chairman Daniel Inouye (D-HI) and House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman James Oberstar (D-MN), have overwhelmingly expressed frustration regarding

the Administration's proposed \$756 million cut to the Airport Improvement Program (AIP) program (based upon FY08 appropriated funding levels). Other lawmakers, including Senate Commerce Ranking Member Ted Stevens (R-AK), have expressed grave concern regarding the President's proposal to eliminate funding for the Small Community Air Service Development Program, as well the Administration's proposed \$75 million level of funding for the Essential Air Service (EAS) program (based upon FY08 appropriated funding levels).

Additionally, both House and Senate aviation leaders have been critical of the Administration's proposal regarding a number of DHS-related provisions, including decreased funding for checkpoint equipment and explosive detection systems (EDS), as well as the change in the LOI process that is counter to the language mandated by the 9/11 bill. In regards to EDS funding, it is important to note that Congress has been especially critical of the \$0.50 security fee increase that would provide over \$426 million in the Administration's proposal. This plan has been proposed and rejected by Congress previously, and the prospects for it advancing this year are very minimal.

In addition to the Fiscal Year 2009 budget hearings, late last week both the House and Senate approved their respective versions of the Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Resolution (H. Con. Res. 312 and S. Con. Res. 70). Although non-binding, both Budget Resolutions propose to restore funding to many programs cut under the President's proposed budget, including funding AIP at \$3.8-\$4.1 billion over four years (as found in both the House passed and Senate proposed FAA Reauthorization bills). Conferees will begin reconciling the two resolutions after the two week spring legislative recess.

It is extremely unlikely that we will see many (if any, other than Defense) stand-alone Appropriations bills pass Congress this year. Federal funding issues are always very difficult to negotiate because of the political implications involved. This is especially true now because of the elections in November. Nonetheless, ACI-NA Government Affairs staff will be working diligently to ensure that your priorities are represented and that critical funding continues to flow to your facilities.

## **2) Congressional Outlook: Aggressive Aviation-Related Agenda Expected in April**

On Friday of last week, both the House and Senate adjourned for the two week Congressional Easter Recess. Both chambers are scheduled to reconvene on Monday March, 31, 2008.

Shortly before the recess period began, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee announced an aggressive aviation hearing schedule for the spring. Both the full Committee and Aviation Subcommittee have scheduled five aviation-related hearings over the next month and a half. Hearing topics include;

- "Critical Lapses in FAA's Safety Oversight of Airlines: Abuses of Regulatory Partnership Programs" (April 3);

- “Aviation Delays and Consumer Issues” (April 16);
- “Clean Water Restoration Act” (April 16), and “Reauthorization of the National Transportation Safety Board” (April 23).
- “Aviation and the Environment: Emissions” (May 6).

In further House action, we expect the Select Committee on Energy Independence and Global Warming to convene a hearing regarding aviation emissions on April 2nd.

Additionally, the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee will hold hearings relating to Fiscal Year 2009 budgets for both the Federal Aviation Administration and Transportation Security Administration, as well as “Airline Industry Financing.” In addition, it is expected that the Senate Aviation Subcommittee will hold an aviation safety hearing in early April. At this time, the Committee has not announced specific hearing dates for any of the aforementioned Senate hearings.

### **3) Government Affairs Committee to Hold Meeting on May 19th in Scottsdale, AZ**

The full ACI-NA Government Affairs Committee will hold its next meeting on Monday, May 19th, from 3:45-5:00 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Resort and Spa at Gainey Ranch in Scottsdale, Arizona.

The meeting is being held in conjunction with the 2008 ACI-NA Airport Board Members and Commissioners Conference. During the conference, Airport Directors, Commissioners and Board Members will meet to discuss complex and crucial issues affecting airports, including strategies to enhance air service, congestion management and delays, FAA Reauthorization and Airport Finance, airport safety and security, environmental issues, concession, airport long-range planning, media relations and other important topics.

For additional information, please visit the Airport Board Members and Commissioners Conference website at <http://www.aci-na.org/conferences/detail?eventId=59>.

**Please contact ACI-NA’s Paul Eubanks ([peubanks@aci-na.org](mailto:peubanks@aci-na.org)) or Scott Weaver ([sweaver@aci-na.org](mailto:sweaver@aci-na.org)) with additional questions or concerns.**