

## AzTA LEGISLATIVE REPORT

### February 15, 2009

The big news of the week is the Congressional passage of H.R. 1: *The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act*. Billions of dollars will be dispersed for public infrastructure including more than \$65 billion for transportation. As part of the Conference process where differences between the House bill and Senate bill were worked out, \$8 billion was added for rail and high-speed rail corridors and more than \$200 million additional dollars were allocated for individual tax incentives to encourage use of public transit. Taken together, these last minute additions foreshadow a deeper commitment to transit and a realization of what transit means to workers and to the future of American cities and towns. Transit is proud to play a role in creating new jobs and helping Americans get to work and school.

On Monday, Governor Brewer announced Mr. John Halikowski as the new Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation. John has spent the last dozen years serving as both the Director of the Arizona House of Representatives Research staff and as the Research Analyst for the Arizona House Transportation Committee. Prior to that, John spent six years with ADOT and MVD. We look forward to working with the new Director and Governor Brewer's Office on the rollout of the *Recovery and Reinvestment Act* dollars as well as the many funding and planning issues facing AzTA members and their customers during these tough economic times. We join with Governor Brewer in thanking Victor Mendez and Richard Travis for their service to Arizona.

State budget news continues to worsen. January revenue reports resulted in predictions for another round of current-year cuts and adjustments of at least \$250 million. How this expected short-fall will work in light of the new federal revenues remains to be seen and will likely be a function of the flexibility of these one-time revenues.

Below are your bill updates for the week. As has been the case since the start of Session, the Senate committees meet to receive briefings from various stakeholders or to hear budget testimony. However, Senate bills are not being considered in committee and so no updates are available for those bills.

#### HB2167 – Transportation District Working Group; Representative Andy Biggs

*Summary:* Requires ADOT to coordinate a transportation-district working group to study and recommend measures related to dividing the state into six transportation districts. Members of the working group shall include representatives from the COGs and MPOs.

*Status:* Scheduled for Feb. 5 House Transportation and Infrastructure committee. Held in Committee

#### HB2254 – State Transportation Board Membership; Representative Russ Jones

*Summary:* Adds a member from a county in which ADOT operates a port of entry

*Status:* Assigned to House Transportation and Infrastructure: Not currently scheduled for a hearing

#### HB2257 – Stopping of Vehicles; Highways; Representative Vic Williams

*Summary:* Under certain conditions ADOT may allow jurisdictions to permit public transportation vehicles to stop on a roadway with a speed limit greater than 45 mph to unload passengers.

*Status:* Amended in Committee to allow vehicles to stop on roads with speed limits up to 55 mph.

#### HB2311 – Car Rental Surcharge; Exception; Representative Adam Driggs

*Summary:* Exempts van pools and other forms of public car-pooling from the car rental surcharge. This bill was put forward by RPTA and supported by AzTA.

*Status:* The bill has passed committee and is ready for House caucus.

HB2480 – Regional Transportation Authority; Representative Russ Jones

*Summary:* Expands the ability of counties with a population over 200,000 to form a Regional Transportation Authority and gives them the authority to levy an excise tax and to bond for projects.

*Status:* The bill has been assigned to two committees and is not yet scheduled for a hearing.

HCR2004 – Tech Correction; Initiative & Referendum; Representative Sam Crump

*Summary:* Though the final language is not yet available, this bill is a placeholder and likely to be the home for language that substantively alters the ability of the state and political subdivisions to place and pass initiatives; including funding initiatives.

*Status:* We will watch this bill closely and let you know when more detail is available.

SB1041 – Tech Correction: Federal Funds; Senator Russell Pearce

*Summary:* This is another placeholder for future language. We expect this to be one of the bills that eventually will carry instructions on a modified role for the State Legislature in dealing with federal funds. Currently, the Executive Branch plays the primary role in allocating the State's share of federal funds.

*Status:* We will watch this bill closely and let you know when more detail is available. (See also SB1444)

SB1073 – Counties; Population Thresholds

*Summary:* One of the impacts of the bill is to increase the population thresholds for HURF distributions.

*Status:* The bill has not yet been assigned to committee.

SB1153 – Railroad Crossings; Senator Thayer Verschoor

*Summary:* Amends the Corporation Commission process to establish railroad crossings

*Status:* The bill has not yet been assigned to committee.

SB1261 – Public Private Partnerships in Transportation; Senator John Nelson

*Summary:* Allows any "unit of government" including cities, towns and counties to enter into public-private partnerships to build transportation facilities. Authority includes tolling authority.

*Status:* The bill has not yet been assigned to committee.

SB1359 – Toll Road Authority; Cities and Towns; Senator Ron Gould

*Summary:* Cities and towns may construct, operate and finance toll roads within their corporate limits

*Status:* This bill has not yet been assigned to committee.

SB1444 – Appropriation of Federal Funds; Senator Al Melvin

*Summary:* Expands the Legislature's authority over the appropriation of federal funds

*Status:* This bill has not yet been assigned to committee.

SB1463 – Public Infrastructure; Public Private Partnerships; Senator Pamela Gorman

*Summary:* Allows the state and political subdivisions to enter into public-private partnerships for the construction of public facilities and infrastructure including transportation infrastructure

*Status:* This bill has not yet been assigned to committee.

SCR1006 – State Appropriation Limit; Reduction; Senator Russell Pearce

*Summary:* Sends to the 2010 ballot a reduction of the state-spending limit to 6.4% of personal income.

*Status:* this bill has not yet been assigned to committee.