

Memo

To: Kate Breen, NAATS President
From: Wally Pike, Congressional Affairs
CC: file
Date: September 15, 2005
Re: Update

The latest guess on the timing of the Transportation appropriations bill is that it will reach the Senate floor early next week as the Senate will address Agriculture and not TTHUD after they complete CJS today. Rolling Transportation into an omnibus is looking less likely as we go along. We expect the transportation amendment votes around Thursday. All of this is subject to change at any time.

Our Republican supporters are receiving significant pressure from the Administration, the FAA, AOPA and Lockheed. Apparently Chairman Bond is now implying that member earmarks might be jeopardized for those Republicans who support our amendment. This has caused us to have to backtrack and shore up support especially with Senators Thune and Specter. Although he is only reflecting the administration's position, Bond's stance is troubling. Due to this uncertainty, Senator Johnson is now wavering on offering the amendment as he feels we may be strategically better to fight the issue in conference. We are not entirely convinced so we are working on contingency plans if Johnson does not offer. Democratic support appears to be firm. Mike McLaughlin of Durbin's staff told us that their removal from S.776 only corrected a "clerical error" and that we shouldn't read anything more into it although he did not absolutely commit to voting for the amendment.

We owe a large measure of gratitude to our members at EKN. We have learned that Senator Byrd will co-sponsor S.776 and will now vote for our amendment. This is huge for us, especially if the amendment isn't offered on the senate floor. Donavon Decker has again contributed greatly for us this week. To a considerable extent this is now a constituent issue so membership contacts with their senators remain critical.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.