



Chairman Mario Diaz-Balart

*Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban
Development, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations*

FY2019 Subcommittee Markup

Opening Statement (as prepared)

May 16, 2018

Today I am pleased to present the fiscal year 2019 THUD bill to the Subcommittee for your consideration, with the goal of a favorable motion to the Full Committee.

I want to thank each of you for your participation during hearings and throughout this process.

I want to thank my Ranking Member, Mr. Price. I couldn't ask for a better collaborator and partner in developing this bill. I continue to value your contributions to both the process and the product as we move this bill forward. This is our fourth fiscal year together, and my appreciation for your input grows every year.

I would like to especially thank Chairman Frelinghuysen for his leadership and lifetime of commitment to public service. The Chairman's deep interest in this bill has been humbling to me. I am honored to support his commitment to rebuilding our Nation's infrastructure – particularly on the Northeast Corridor. And I am grateful for his commitment to ensuring that our most vulnerable citizens have the dignity of decent housing – especially the elderly, the disabled, and our veterans.

I thank Mrs. Lowey for her commitment to the programs in this bill, and for her continued leadership and collaboration at the top of this Committee. She and the Chairman have shown how we can accomplish great things when we reach across the aisle to get things done for the American people.

The bill we are considering today provides \$71.8 billion in discretionary budget authority. This is \$1.5 billion above the enacted level, and \$23.8 billion above the budget request.

The bipartisan caps deal signed by the President earlier this year set the framework for the investments you see in the bill before you today.

There is a nearly unanimous consensus that we need to make major investments in our roads, bridges, railways, seaports, and airports.

This bill shows we don't need to wait to do a separate infrastructure bill. We can make those investments right now, under the framework of the caps deal, through authorized programs.

This bill builds on our accomplishments in the 2018 omnibus, and makes a second, historic down-payment to rebuild our nation. The THUD bill is an infrastructure bill.

At the same time, we worked to ensure that there is no place for waste, fraud and abuse of our constituents' hard earned tax dollars.

We also made sure we didn't grow the bureaucracy here in Washington. This is why we prioritize formula programs that get money directly to States and localities – for both Housing and Transportation investments.

For the Department of Transportation, the bill provides \$28 billion in discretionary funds, and \$88 billion in total funding, including obligation limitations consistent with the FAST Act.

For the BUILD program – formerly known as TIGER – the bill provides \$750 million, with a balance among rural, suburban, and urban projects, and a set aside of \$250 million for port infrastructure.

For the Federal Aviation Administration, the bill supports the full operations of the air traffic control system. We invest \$1.3 billion in Next Gen, and provide \$500 million for additional discretionary airport grants.

The bill provides \$4.25 billion in federal highway funding above and beyond the FAST Act – a 10 percent increase for highway and bridge projects nationwide. This is the largest increase in the bill -- \$1.7 billion above the omnibus. Every state – and thousands of localities – will see the real impact of this funding as construction crews get to work on road and bridge repairs that are needed right now.

This bill funds rail programs at \$3.2 billion. This funding will continue safety investments through Positive Train Control (PTC) grants. The bill will also continue to make progress on the state of good repair backlog throughout the Nation – including our most congested routes on the Northeast Corridor.

The bill provides \$13.6 billion for the Federal Transit Administration. This fully funds the FAST Act formula grants and WMATA, and includes \$2.6 billion for the Capital Investment Grant program, consistent with last year. Also included is an additional \$800 million for Transit Infrastructure Grants to supplement targeted FAST Act formula programs.

In our Housing Title, we once again provide funding to continue serving those who need assistance – with a priority on the elderly, disabled and veterans.

In this bill, we need about \$1 billion per year just to keep up with inflation and housing market costs.

The bill provides targeted resources to address the needs of some of our most vulnerable populations, including:

- New funding for non-elderly disabled vouchers, otherwise known as the “Frelinghuysen vouchers”
- An additional \$40 million is provided to serve more homeless veterans. That’s on top of over \$600 million to support vets already housed by the HUD VASH programs.
- \$25 million is provided for victims of domestic violence
- \$50 million is provided for vouchers and services to help families with young children move closer to jobs and achieve self-sufficiency.
- \$393 million is included for persons living with HIV / AIDS, and
- \$100 million for competitive Tribal housing grants to address the severely distressed housing in Indian country.

This bill includes \$3.3 billion for CDBG and \$1.2 billion in the HOME program. These programs get money straight to state and local governments to support decision-making where it should happen: at the community level.

Now I'd like to turn to the Ranking Member of this Subcommittee, the Gentleman from North Carolina, Mr. Price, for any comments he may have.

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