



LINCOLN CHAFEE

U.S. SENATOR

RHODE ISLAND

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SENATE COMMITTEE APPROVES CHAFEE AMENDMENTS TO HIGHWAY BILL

WASHINGTON, DC – The U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved several amendments sponsored by Senator Lincoln Chafee for inclusion in the \$255 billion highway bill. The Committee approved the surface transportation bill by a vote of 17-2, with Senate floor consideration expected early next year.

After completion of the legislation yesterday, Senator Chafee stated, “I express my gratitude to Senators Inhofe, Jeffords, Bond and Reid for striking a bipartisan agreement and bringing this bill before the Committee for consideration. This process is complicated and can only be successful if members are willing to work together. In this spirit, I am pleased that the four members were able to move beyond political ties and make tough choices in crafting this legislation. Their collective efforts have resulted in a bill that advances the nation’s surface transportation law in significant ways. I am also pleased that several of my amendments making improvements to the environmental review and historic preservation sections, and setting funds aside for stormwater projects, have been included in the bill.”

Stormwater:

This amendment will provide critical new resources to address stormwater runoff associated with our nation’s federal highway system. The amendment sets aside \$958 million to aid state and local governments in reducing pollution from stormwater runoff from roads and highways. These resources are vital as states and municipalities struggle to come into compliance with the requirements of the Clean Water Act.

Historic battlefields:

An amendment to clarify that acquisition and preservation of the nation’s historic battlefields continue to be an eligible transportation enhancement activity. This amendment protects these national treasures.

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Environmental Streamlining:

This amendment clarifies the legal responsibilities of an agency cooperating with the DOT in an environmental review. It makes it clear that the cooperating agency is required to uphold other obligations specified under existing laws. The amendment encourages the cooperation between agencies spelled out in the bill, but also clearly lays out their responsibilities.

Historic Preservation:

This amendment, included in the manager's amendment, eliminated a provision of the bill that would have exempted projects associated with interstate highways from the process designed to protect sites of historic significance (called 4(f)). Section 4(f) has helped preserve many historic and natural resources across the nation and this amendment ensures that tradition will be continued.

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