

FAST Act Authorizations vs. Appropriations

The bipartisan budget agreements in effect for fiscal years 2018, 2019 and 2020 ended years of slow growth for discretionary appropriations and allowed the appropriators to not only fund authorized discretionary programs at much higher levels but also to add money to existing trust fund contract authority programs.

As a result, the appropriators wound up meeting the FAST Act obligation limitation levels out of the Highway Trust Fund for the five years of the FAST Act (\$287.3 billion) and then adding another \$10 billion on top of that over FY 2018-2020 (\$7.94 billion for highways and \$2.04 billion for mass transit) meaning that total funding for those programs was 3.4 percent over the five-year FAST authorized levels.

For programs that were authorized to be appropriated entirely from general revenues, the FAST Act authorized \$23.5 billion over five years and the appropriators provided \$24.6 billion, 4.4 percent more than authorized. But since the extra money did not arrive for 2016, over the four-year FY 2017-2020 period, total appropriations were almost \$1.5 billion (7.6 percent) higher than authorized by FAST.

All told, total discretionary funding action by the Appropriations Committees for programs authorized by the FAST Act exceeded the target authorization levels by \$11 billion (3.7 percent) over five years.

How Did Actual Appropriations Compare to FAST Act Authorization Levels?

Millions of dollars of obligation limitation and/or discretionary budget authority.

		Five-Year (FY 2016-2020)				Four-Year (FY 2017-2020)				
		FAST	Actual	Difference		FAST	Actual	Difference		
Trust Fund Programs & GF Supps.										
FHWA	Federal-aid Highways	221,495.0	229,436.1	+7,941.1	+3.6%	179,134.0	187,075.1	+7,941.1	+4.4%	
FTA	Formula and Bus Grants	48,904.4	50,948.4	+2,044.0	+4.2%	39,556.8	41,600.8	+2,044.0	+5.2%	
NHTSA	Operations and Research	745.3	745.2	-0.1	0.0%	602.3	602.3	0.0	0.0%	
NHTSA	Safety Grants	2,989.6	2,989.6	0.0	0.0%	2,416.2	2,416.2	0.0	0.0%	
FMCSA	Operations and Programs	1,399.6	1,399.6	0.0	0.0%	1,132.2	1,132.2	0.0	0.0%	
FMCSA	Safety Grants	1,824.4	1,828.7	+4.3	+0.2%	1,511.4	1,515.7	+4.3	+0.3%	
Subtotal, Trust Fund Programs		277,358.3	287,347.6	+9,989.4	+3.6%	224,352.9	234,342.4	+9,989.5	+4.5%	
GF Discretionary Appropriations										
FTA	Admin. Expenses	575.1	564.5	-10.6	-1.8%	460.1	456.5	-3.6	-0.8%	
FTA	Tech. Assist. & Training	25.0	20.0	-5.0	-20.0%	20.0	20.0	0.0	0.0%	
FTA	R&D, Tech. & Deploy.	100.0	0.0	-100.0	-100.0%	80.0	0.0	-80.0	-100.0%	
FTA	Capital Invest. Grants	11,508.9	11,765.3	+256.3	+2.2%	9,207.1	9,588.3	+381.1	+4.1%	
NHTSA	Vehicle Safety	692.1	906.0	+213.8	+30.9%	559.4	753.2	+193.8	+34.6%	
FRA	Amtrak Grants - Total	8,050.0	8,768.2	+718.2	+8.9%	6,600.0	7,378.2	+778.2	+11.8%	
FRA	CRISI Grants	1,103.0	1,240.5	+137.5	+12.5%	1,005.0	1,240.5	+235.5	+23.4%	
FRA	SOGR Partner. Grants	997.0	875.0	-122.0	-12.2%	915.0	875.0	-40.0	-4.4%	
FRA	Restore/Enhance Grants	100.0	32.0	-68.0	-68.0%	80.0	32.0	-48.0	-60.0%	
FRA	Amtrak IG	105.0	118.6	+13.6	+12.9%	85.0	97.1	+12.1	+14.2%	
PHMSA	Hazardous Materials	283.0	290.6	+7.6	+2.7%	203.0	235.0	+32.0	+15.8%	
Subtotal, GF Discret. Programs		23,539.1	24,580.7	+1,041.6	+4.4%	19,214.6	20,675.8	+1,461.2	+7.6%	
Total FAST Discretionary		300,897.4	311,928.3	+11,030.9	+3.7%	243,567.5	255,018.2	+11,450.6	+4.7%	