

Senate bows to House to extend transportation funding for 90 days

From the Washington Post

By Ashley Halsey III,

Angry Senators on Thursday bowed to the will of the House with a 90-day extension of transportation funding two days before a deadline that could have shutdown highway and transit projects across the nation.

“They run off on their vacation and leave the people twisting in the wind,” Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) said in a condemnation from the Senate floor.

Despite several efforts to advance a bipartisan Senate bill championed by Boxer, House leaders opted for a three-month extension while they try to break a deadlock that has stalled their own proposal to fund transportation by expanding offshore oil drilling.

The extension leaves transportation financing in an increasingly precarious position.

After a morning of angry, finger-pointing debate, the House voted to extend the nation’s transportation funding at current levels for 90 days, counting on the Senate to follow suit before the money runs out at midnight Saturday.

Undaunted, Rep. Peter A. DeFazio (D-Ore.) rose to repeat the charge that Republicans had behaved like circus clowns in fumbling their own five-year transportation funding bill, which stalled in the face of bipartisan opposition and a hail of outside condemnation.

The vote came at the critical moment in the annual construction cycle, the eve of the launch season for highway projects.