

Transportation seeks \$68 billion budget

by UPI

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Transportation Department's \$68 billion budget for 2009 would fund safety programs and ease road and air traffic congestion, the department said. "This budget helps us move forward on a new course that delivers high levels of safety, takes advantage of modern technology and financing mechanisms, and eases congestion with efficient and reliable transportation systems," Transportation Secretary Mary Peters said Monday in a news release. Peters said about one third of the budget would be used for safety programs for all modes of travel. The budget also provides funding to hire additional safety personnel. The budget includes \$10.1 billion for transit programs, which Peters said stressed the department's efforts to fight gridlock. "If last year's record traffic jams and flight delays taught us anything, it is that traditional approaches are not capable of producing the results we need to keep America's economy growing," Peters said. Peters said the budget encourages innovation in transit matters by proposing to use \$175 million in inactive earmarks and 75 percent of specific discretionary highway and transit program funds to fight congestion, giving priority to those combining pricing, transit and technology solutions.

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