WASHINGTON, D.C. – National Association of Counties’ (NACo) Executive Director Larry E. Naake released the following statement applauding Senate passage this week of S. 1813, the surface transportation bill:

“Passage of this bill is a major step in the enactment of a multi-year highway and transit reauthorization bill that will ensure that counties, cities and states have access to federal funds to maintain and improve their highways, bridges and bus and rail systems.

“Two provisions were added and adopted to S. 1813 that will make this bill more local government friendly. An amendment offered by Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) and Sen. Bob Casey (D-Pa.) would restore funding that had been available since 1978 for off-system bridges. The provision requires states to spend close to $650 million annually to rehabilitate and rebuild approximately 80,000 deficient bridges not on the federal highway system.

“Additional legislative language, proposed by Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.) and other senators, was adopted to increase the likelihood that Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) between 50,000-120,000 population would retain their MPO status. The original bill included language that could have lead to many MPOs to being decertified.

“As a next step, NACo is urging the House of Representatives to act as promptly as possible to pass a highway and transit bill.”

Naake said passage of a multi-year surface transportation bill is critical to the nation’s counties since county governments own about 1.77 million miles of highways, 256,000 bridges, and about one-third of the nation’s transit systems.

Click here for more information or contact Bob Fogel at 202.942.4217 or bfogel@naco.org.

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The National Association of Counties (NACo) is the only national organization that represents county governments in the United States. Founded in 1935, NACo provides essential services to the nation’s 3,068 counties. NACo advances issues with a unified voice before the federal government, improves the public’s understanding of county government, assists counties in finding and sharing innovative solutions through education and research, and provides value-added services to save counties and taxpayers money. For more information about NACo, visit www.naco.org.