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# Senate Unit Opens Highway Fund To City Bus Uses

But a Bid for Authorizations  
For Rail Transit Is Denied  
As Panel Clears Measure

Sum for Interstate Roads Cut

*By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter*

WASHINGTON — The Senate Public Works Committee voted to open up the Highway Trust Fund to provide massive aid to states and localities to purchase buses and build bus lanes.

But it turned down Nixon administration pleas to allow some of the money for state and local fixed-rail projects, ruling out many future urban mass-transportation systems. The trust fund money currently is restricted largely to road building.

The committee, in approving a massive highway bill, required that part of the urban highway system funds be used for purchasing buses and building bus lanes. The authorization for the urban highway system was increased sharply to \$800 million for both fiscal 1974 and fiscal 1975 from \$100 million in the current fiscal year, which began July 1.

Of the \$800 million annual authorization, at least \$300 million must be used each year by states and localities for buses. They also may choose to use any portion of the rest of the money for the same purposes. This marks the first diversion of trust fund money of any sort.

The committee voted to reduce the annual authorization for the interstate highway program to \$3.25 billion a year until fiscal 1980 from the current \$4 billion annual level. The bill also sharply increases the authorization for highway safety programs and sets up procedures allowing states to take over some of the operations of the highway programs.

The House Public Works Committee has held hearings on the highway bill and hopes to finish action on the legislation sometime next month.

When the highway bill comes to the Senate floor, urban Senators are expected again to try to open up the trust fund for fixed-rail projects, but they probably face an uphill struggle. The highway interests sharply oppose tinkering with the trust fund.

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