

February 28, 2019 [View this email in your browser](#)



## CONGRESS BRIEF

*What Lies Ahead on Infrastructure?*

Coming Soon:

### **House Hearing on Gas Tax and Transportation Funding**

House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Richard Neal (D-MA) announced that the Committee will hold a hearing titled “Our Nation’s Crumbling Infrastructure and the Need for Immediate Action,” on March 6 at 10:30am. The hearing will highlight the need to adequately fund infrastructure projects and identify transportation funding opportunities, including an increase of the federal gas tax.

### **House Transportation and Infrastructure Hearing: Examining How Federal Infrastructure Policy Could Help Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change**

Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR), who was notably detained by heavy snow in Oregon, focused this second hearing of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on climate mitigation and resiliency. Discussion centered around the transportation sector as a contributor of greenhouse gas emissions and the need to implement federal policies that incentivize local governments to invest in green infrastructure and transportation projects.

### **Senate Science, Commerce and Transportation Hearing: Connecting America: Examining Intermodal Connections Across Our Surface Transportation Network**

Chairwoman Deb Fischer (R-NE) discussed her upcoming plans to reintroduce the *Build USA Infrastructure Act*, which would add an additional \$21.4 billion to the Highway Trust Fund annually for the next 5 years. There was also a conversation about looking beyond a first mile, last mile approach when making improvement plans and discussion on the importance of INFRA and other merit-based funding programs. Joe Szabo, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP) Executive Director and former Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration testified at the hearing. His remarks were summarized on the CMAP Twitter feed [here](#).

### **Senate Science, Commerce and Transportation Hearing: Policy Principles for a Federal Data Privacy Framework in the United States**

The hearing addressed the creation of a federal framework to protect consumers against data misuse. Discussion covered the idea of the internet as an interstate good, the extension of FTC authority through preemption, and the need to avoid a patchwork of state regulation. Witnesses spoke on the importance of developing a strong relationship between industries and the federal government in order to effectively protect consumers.

## ADMINISTRATION

### **White House Ends Talks With California Over Auto Fuel Efficiency**

The White House announced it has ended talks with California officials over fuel economy standards, setting up a court battle that may create years-long regulatory uncertainty for

automakers. Negotiations began after federal agencies released a proposal last year that recommended weakening national mileage requirements and revoking California's authority to set tailpipe greenhouse gas emissions standards for new cars. Automakers unsuccessfully urged the Trump administration to strike a deal with California for the sake of national uniformity, as roughly 1/3rd of auto sales come from states that adhere to California vehicle emission standards.

## REGIONS BRIEF

### **New Regional Transportation Authority in Oklahoma Looks to Connect Metro Cities**

Earlier this week, six cities in Central Oklahoma formed a new regional transportation authority (RTA) with the goal of increasing public transportation access. The Association of Central Oklahoma Governments (ACOG) completed a study in 2005 outlining several regional transit solutions. The creation of the RTA is the latest step in that process. The new RTA's efforts will focus on connecting the suburbs to each other and to Oklahoma City.

### **Oregon Department of Transportation's Road Usage Charge Program Update**

Oregon continues to test the feasibility of a miles-based transportation tax with the OreGO program, which seeks to fund road maintenance and improvements using alternative funding models. Continued research into road charging technology and electric vehicle use are expected to provide insights on how the initiative could expand. Collaborative learning opportunities through partnerships with other states, like Washington and California, have contributed to a growing base of information to inform other pilot programs throughout the country.

### **Bumpy Road Ahead for Ohio Governor's \$1.2B Gas Tax Plan**

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine's new proposal to pass an 18-cent gas tax increase faces a tough road through Ohio's legislature. If passed, the proposal would raise \$1.2 billion annually, with 60% going directly to the Ohio Department of Transportation and the other 40% to already approved local and regional transit projects. DeWine's proposal would help address critical safety and infrastructure improvement projects, while costing the average driver around \$2 per week.

## JOBS

*[View full list of jobs!](#)*

### **Director of Marketing & Community Outreach**

Posted: 2/26/2019

Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Lansing, MI

### **Senior Economist**

Posted: 2/22/2019

San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA

### **Executive Director**

Posted: 2/22/2019

Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, Chicago, IL

### **Assistant Planner**

Posted: 2/19/2019

Puget Sound Regional Council, Seattle, WA

### **Director, Planning**

Posted: 2/19/2019

Palm Beach County Planning Division, West Palm Beach, FL

## OPPORTUNITIES

*[View full list opportunities!](#)*

### **Celebrating Women: Balanced Engagement for Equitable Plans,**

Wednesday, March 6th – 2:00 PM EST

To celebrate this year's International Women's Day theme of #BalanceforBetter, join Metro Quest for a candid conversation that discusses achieving balanced, equitable public input and also provides guidance for women looking to take on leadership roles in planning.

**Passenger Ferry Grant Program FY19 Funding Webinar**

Thursday, March 7th – 2:30 PM EST

Join FTA program staff to learn more about the **Passenger Ferry Grant Program**. The program will award funds competitively to assist in the financing of capital projects to support existing passenger ferry service, establish new ferry service, and to repair and modernize ferry boats, terminals, and related facilities and equipment.

**Webinar on the THEA Vehicle Pilot Operational Readiness Milestone**

Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup> – 11:30 AM

During this free webinar, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) will share how the **Tampa Hillsborough Expressway Authority (THEA) Connected Vehicle Pilot** conducted a series of coordinated tests and demonstrations to ensure the operational readiness of the system. The program is a national effort to deploy, test, and operationalize cutting-edge mobile and roadside technologies that have the potential to save lives, improve personal mobility, enhance economic productivity, reduce negative environmental impacts, and transform public agency operations.

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