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CONGRESS BRIEF

Senate Democrats Infrastructure Plan

Senate Democrats released a *Blueprint to Rebuild America's Infrastructure* on Tuesday, pledging a trillion dollars over the next ten years to repair, modernize, and build infrastructure from ports to schools. Infrastructure spending as a percentage of GDP is lower than it has been in the past twenty years, and the Democrats proposal highlights areas where infrastructure spending is most needed. The blueprint targets sixteen discreet areas of investment and outlines potential options for spending. These investments include \$100 billion towards reconstructing roads and bridges, a \$10 billion TIGER Grant expansion, \$25 billion for community resilience projects, \$110 billion for water and sewer rehabilitation, and \$130 billion to repair and expand transit systems. The Democrats expect this federal investment to generate 15 million new jobs in industries like construction and manufacturing. To pay for these investments, Democrats suggest closing tax loopholes or relying on the generation of revenue through job creation, but ultimately left the question of how to fund their proposal to the administration.

News from House Speaker Paul Ryan

House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) has invited President Trump to address a joint session of Congress on February 28. This speech traditionally takes the place of a State of the Union address during an inaugural year and gives the president a chance to outline his priorities to Congress. White House Press Secretary Sean Spicer has said that President Trump has accepted the invitation.

Speaker Ryan also discussed President Trump's plan to introduce an infrastructure proposal in the first 200 days. Ryan indicated that the size of the package has yet to be determined and will depend on the fiscal space that is created in the spring budget. It is noteworthy that the speaker's outline for his legislative agenda does not include infrastructure in the timeline for the first 200 days.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

Chao's Clear Path to Confirmation

The Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee voted unanimously on Tuesday to send Transportation Secretary-designate Elaine Chao's nomination to the floor for a full Senate vote. Chao was approved by voice vote in committee and her confirmation vote is currently slated for Tuesday, January 31 at 12:20 PM ET.

Executive Order to Expedite High Priority Infrastructure Projects

President Trump issued an executive order on Tuesday to expedite delivery of high priority infrastructure projects. The order references agency processes and procedures that "routinely and excessively" delay projects that address the U.S. electric grid and telecommunication systems, as well as upgrades and repairs to port facilities, airports, pipelines, bridges, and highways. Projects can be designated as high priority at the request of a governor or head of an executive department or agency and review and approval by the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). Any project designated as "high priority" in this manner requires coordination between CEQ and the head of the relevant agency "to establish, in a manner consistent with law, expedited procedures and deadlines for completion of environmental reviews and approvals for such projects."

High Priority Infrastructure List

A list was flying around Washington recently that purports to indicate the priority projects for the new administration. The list includes 50 projects totaling \$137.5 billion as public-private partnerships and is based on a list compiled by the National Governors Association. We are providing a link to the list as reference, but it appears this does not come from the transition team.

A Final Farewell from Secretary Foxx

January 19 marked Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx's last day in office. In his farewell message to USDOT employees, Foxx highlighted the successes of USDOT during his tenure, including securing the first long-term transportation bill in over a decade and embracing innovative technologies, such as autonomous vehicles and unmanned aircraft systems. He also highlighted the integration of his long-standing priority of using transportation policy to foster inclusivity and equality in USDOT work. Foxx closed by thanking his department for their support and stating that the future is bright for USDOT.

Beyond Traffic 2045 National Freight Strategy Framework

This USDOT document reflects on the progress made to address freight challenges and provides thoughts on the future of freight and the role of the government with regard to freight policy. The *Freight Strategy Framework* includes lessons learned and synthesizes input from engaged citizens, business leaders, practitioners, operators, and planners, among others, as to what works, what does not work, and what future we should collectively work to achieve for the future freight economy.

Dear Colleague Letter on TAM Performance Targets

FTA sent a 'Dear Colleague' letter on January 18 to remind transit agencies and MPOs of the timeframes set in the Transit Asset Management (TAM) and Metropolitan and Statewide and Nonmetropolitan Transportation Planning Final Rules. The TAM Final Rule requires transit providers to set performance targets for state of good repair by January 1, 2017. The Planning Rule requires each MPO to establish targets no later than 180 days after the date on which the relevant state or provider of public transportation establishes its performance targets. The letter reminds transit providers to deliver their performance targets to their respective MPOs so that MPOs can establish their own targets before June 30, 2017.

Performance Rules Webinars Postponed

Yesterday, FHWA notified registrants that the Pavement and Bridge Condition Performance Measures Final Rule and System Performance/Freight/CMAQ Performance Measures Final Rule webinars scheduled for January 25 and 26 have been postponed until further notice. The message said they will post registration information when they have been rescheduled.

REGIONS BRIEF

Climate Resilience and Planning Peer Exchange Report: ARC

On October 4-5, 2016 the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) co-hosted a climate resilience and planning peer exchange with FHWA. Staff from several MPOs, state DOTs, and public and private organizations gathered together to share best practices for climate resilience. Staff also provided guidance to FHWA on what resources would be helpful in addressing climate risks to fulfill the FAST Act requirements for integrating resilience into the planning process. FHWA's report on this peer exchange includes summaries of the presentations, discussion take-aways, and FHWA next steps. Other MPOs who participated include Broward MPO, Hillsborough County MPO, North Central Texas Council of Governments, and Puget Sound Regional Council.

JOBS

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Director, Information Technology and Facilities Management

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OPPORTUNITIES *[View full list of grants and events!](#)*

Performance-based Planning and Programming Course

Sign-up to host this course.

The National Highway Institute's (NHI) hosts a two-day course on Performance-Based Planning and Programming that will familiarize transportation agencies with the key elements of a performance-based planning and programming framework (PBPP), how PBPP supports Transportation Performance Management (TPM), and how both of these relate to the requirements for transportation planning and transportation system performance. The course begins by providing an overview of performance-based planning and programming, then walks the participants through each element of the USDOT performance-based planning and programming framework initiated by MAP-21 and continued under the FAST Act, providing examples of alternative approaches and real-world applications.

Updated Draft Agenda Available! 2017 National Conference of Regions

February 12-15 – Washington Court Hotel, 525 New Jersey Ave NW Washington, DC

The National Conference of Regions is NARC's forum to determine key policy issues and a legislative agenda for the year ahead, targeting topics central to our members' missions and their local elected officials' focus. Additional information will be available soon. Capitol Hill Day is the final day of the conference, February 15, 2017.

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