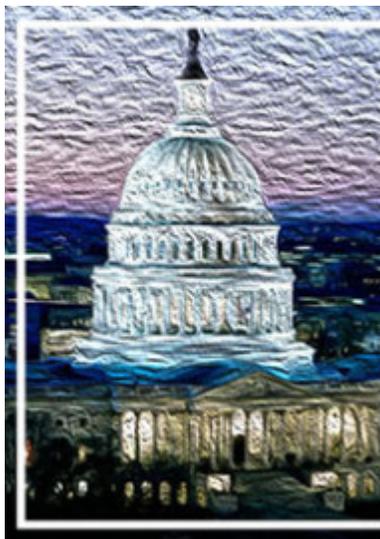




NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS



**2017 NATIONAL
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FEBRUARY 12-15
WASHINGTON, DC

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CONGRESS BRIEF

Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao Confirmed

By a vote of 93-6, the Senate on Tuesday confirmed Elaine Chao as the nation's 18th Transportation Secretary. In an email shortly after the vote, Secretary Chao reminded readers that this is her third stint at the U.S. Department of Transportation: "I look forward to working with you once again to ensure that the safety and efficiency of our country's transportation systems are second to none." She was sworn in by Vice President Pence shortly after the vote.

While Chao had widespread support, Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) sent a letter ahead of the vote asking for her stance on the recent immigration executive order. Nelson also wanted to know if the administration looked to Chao for advice on the order that created uncertainty and protests at airports over the weekend. The senator did not receive a response but voted for Chao regardless. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) voted against her confirmation because she had not publicly stated her stance on the immigration order. In addition to Schumer, the other five senators who voted against Chao's confirmation were Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), and Bernie Sanders (I-VT).

Appropriations Outlook

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) told reporters last week that this year's packed legislative schedule will prevent completion of all twelve spending bills through regular order. Returning to regular order has been a priority for McConnell, who also failed last year to pass all regular spending bills before the end of the fiscal year on October 1. This announcement was no surprise, however, given the lengthy process of confirming cabinet members, a Supreme Court nomination, and a resolution to the current year spending bills. The current continuing resolution expires on April 28.

Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America

Yesterday, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held their first full committee hearing of the 115th Congress titled *Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America*. The committee heard from leaders of FedEx Corporation, Cargill, Inc., BMW of North America, and Vermeer Corporation, as well as the president of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). The witnesses offered ideas about how to pay for an infrastructure package and what types of projects should be included. Several talked about the need for air traffic control reform and spoke in favor of user fees and increasing the gas tax. The panelists were also asked by Michael Capuano (D-MA) about public/private partnerships, a cornerstone of Trump's original plan, to which they all agreed cannot alone solve our infrastructure needs. In Chairman Bill Shuster's (R-PA) opening statement he talked about the focus on infrastructure in this election and the mention of it during the president's inaugural address, but did not offer any details on their infrastructure plans.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

Trump Seeks to Reduce Regulations with '2-for-1'

On Monday, President Trump signed an executive order requiring agencies to revoke two regulations for every new one they issue. Military and national security issues will be exempt. The administration said that agencies will propose regulations to revoke when they write new ones and the administration will approve them. However, agencies cannot simply strike regulations; revoking one requires a detailed administrative process. While campaigning, Trump promised to kill 75 percent of all executive rules and is starting with this new executive order.

REGIONS BRIEF

SANDAG Region Chosen as Autonomous Vehicle Proving Ground

USDOT designated the San Diego region as one of their ten proving grounds for autonomous vehicles. The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), Caltrans, and the City of Chula Vista jointly submitted the **application** with support from several auto manufactures and technology companies. SANDAG's region is the only proving ground to incorporate a state/regional/local/private partnership. USDOT designated proving grounds will offer opportunities for sharing information and developing best practices concerning the safe deployment of autonomous vehicles.

Dangerous by Design 2016

In 2014, 4,884 people were killed by a car while walking. Dangerous by Design, produced by Smart Growth America, digs into the available data to examine which metro areas are the most dangerous for pedestrians and the intersections of race and class among those most at risk. Topping the list are seven Florida metro areas.

JOBS

View full list of jobs!

Alamo Local Authority (ALA) Program Analyst

Alamo Area Council of Governments, San Antonio, TX

Executive Director

Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments, Colorado Springs, CO

Executive Director

Spokane Regional Transportation Council, Spokane, WA

OPPORTUNITIES

View full list of grants and events!

Quarterly Technical Assistance Webinar for the NPMRDS

February 9, 1:00 – 3:00 PM ET

The National Performance Management Research Data Set (NPMRDS) is the probe data that FHWA is using internally for passenger and freight analysis and making available to states and MPOs. In this webinar, FHWA and its contractors will provide an overview of the probe data set,

demonstrate data applications, and respond to technical assistance questions. This webinar is open to USDOT, state DOTs, MPOs, academic, and private sector participants.

Fostering Innovation in Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation Pooled Fund Study

Call for participants ends May 31

Transportation agencies across the country are seeking ways to improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety and mobility. However, existing research programs that advance innovation, such as the National Cooperative Highway Research Program, cannot meet the growing needs for pedestrian and bicyclist research. This Transportation Pooled Fund (TPF) study will supplement existing research venues and fill an important missing gap by emphasizing short turnaround practical research on issues immediately relevant to practitioners. It will address national goals and priorities identified through input from local, state, and national partners in FHWA's *Strategic Agenda for Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation*. The pooled fund will provide a mechanism for federal, state, regional, and local transportation agencies; academic institutions; foundations; private firms; and other stakeholders to collaboratively fund and implement pedestrian and bicycle research.

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.

CONTACT US

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