



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

CONGRESS BRIEF

Infrastructure Package Discussions

House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) said on Tuesday that he has met with Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and is working with Energy and Commerce Chairman Greg Walden (R-OR) on the much-discussed infrastructure package. Shuster also indicated their proposal will include broadband, electric grid, pipeline, and transportation, but will not be released until the House has dispatched with Obamacare repeal and tax reform. Shuster indicated that tax code changes will be an important piece of future funding.

Amtrak's President and CEO Wick Moorman told the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee that an infrastructure package should include direct federal funding for Amtrak and other rail organizations. He also argued that federal funding would help maximize public private partnership investments and highlighted several key projects, such as the Hudson Tunnels, that need long-term investment.

Along with Amtrak, port executives are vying for funding in an infrastructure package. Heads of ports around the country spoke with House staff members this week on the backlog of projects that threaten the economic benefit of ports and the importance of including funding for port maintenance. This issue has also been a priority for House T&I Ranking Member Peter DeFazio (D-OR) who supports \$27 billion in harbor maintenance over the next decade. With so much talk about infrastructure during this election cycle and administration, there is no shortage of interest groups making their case for funding to lawmakers.

Trump's New Infrastructure Advisors

President Trump has tapped two Manhattan real estate developers to serve as infrastructure advisors. Richard LeFrak and Steven Roth will lead a committee made up of builders and engineers to deliver an infrastructure bill.

Self-Driving Car Bill on the Horizon

Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee Chairman John Thune (R-SD) and Gary Peters (D-MI) have announced in a joint statement their intention to propose self-driving vehicle legislation this year. They want to help innovators bring this technology to the roads and provide regulatory flexibility for testing and development. Peters is co-founder of the bipartisan Senate Smart Transportation Caucus and worked on the proving ground legislation and legislation in the FAST Act allowing states to invest federal dollars in complementary vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) technology. Both Senators see this technology as a way to save lives and bring America to the forefront of smart mobility.

Series of FAA Reauthorization Hearings Began This Week

The House T&I subcommittee on Aviation began a series of hearings this week as part of its preparations for developing the next Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill. The subcommittee's **first hearing** on Wednesday explored the state of American aviation manufacturing with witnesses from Boeing, Pratt and Whitney, FAA, and Textron Aviation.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

New Effective Dates of Final Performance Rules Announced

The administration has released new effective dates for the Assessing Pavement Condition and Bridge Condition for the National Highway Performance Program; and Assessing Performance of the National Highway System, Freight Movement on the Interstate System, and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program Final Rules following their regulatory freeze. The two performance rules will now be effective starting March 21, 2017. The original effective date was February 17, 2017.

FTA May Withhold Transit Funding from DC, Maryland, and Virginia

FTA told transit systems in DC, Maryland, and Virginia that it will withhold five percent of the Fiscal Year 2017 transit formula funds until a new State Safety Oversight Program (SSOP) is certified for Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority rail operations. In February of 2016, FTA warned the governors and mayor that failure to obtain a certified SSOP by February 9, 2017 would result in withholding of funds. The withholding amounts to \$8.9 million in total. The affected parties must take several key actions as stated by the FTA, including:

- “Passing identical legislation by Maryland and Virginia state legislatures and the District of Columbia, and signed by the state Governors and District Mayor.
- Submitting a certification application and documentation to FTA showing that the State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) has independence from the rail transit system it oversees; enforcement and investigation authority; adequate staffing and training; FTA grant recipient status; and has met general program requirements.
- Participating in a transitional hand-off period whereby FTA officials work side-by-side with new SSOA officials to ensure they are capable of conducting all oversight responsibilities required by Federal law.
- Verifying with FTA that the new SSOA’s enforcement and oversight capabilities, as well as their inspection, investigation and audit activities are adequate and meet all statutory requirements.”

Automakers to Urge Moratorium on State Self-Driving Car Regulations

Toyota Research Institute CEO Gill Pratt urged lawmakers in a hearing on Tuesday to keep states from setting their own autonomous vehicle rules to avoid a patchwork of regulations across the country. Executives from General Motors, Volvo, and Lyft also plan to encourage Congress to hinder states from making their own regulations. According to Anders Karrberg, Volvo’s vice president of government affairs, 48 bills in 20 states have been released in the last two months alone. Karrberg also stated in the hearing that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration should explicitly tell states to refrain from creating autonomous vehicle laws.

REGIONS BRIEF

NARC Autonomous/Connected Vehicle Working Group

NARC held a listening session on autonomous and connected vehicles this week at our National Conference of Regions in Washington, DC. Members gave feedback on what their regions have done around this issue and ways NARC can help moving forward. The working group plans to hold regularly scheduled calls and/or webinars and will provide input into actions NARC can take to prepare regions for this technology. If you are interested in joining this working group please email Sarah Reed at sarah@narc.org.

Route Fifty National Conference of Regions Coverage

Reporters from Route Fifty attended NARC’s National Conference of Regions this week and **interviewed** NARC’s Director of Transportation Programs, Erich Zimmermann, on infrastructure funding and the MPO Coordination Rule. They also attended and covered two different sessions at the conference on NARC’s **Fleets for the Future grant program** and **infrastructure funding**.

JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Planner/Research Analyst

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Philadelphia, PA

Transportation Program Manager

Yakima Valley Conference of Governments, Yakima, WA

Executive Director

Merced County Association of Governments, Merced, CA

OPPORTUNITIES

View full list of grants and events!

TRB Integrated Transportation and Land Use Models Survey

Open Until February 17

The Transportation Research Board (TRB) is preparing a Synthesis of Practice for Integrated Transportation and Land Use Models. This is being done for the National Cooperative Highway Research Program, under the sponsorship of AASHTO and in cooperation with FHWA. Synthesis Topic 48-06 seeks to document the state of practice of integrated land use/transport modeling for use by planning agencies with varying resource levels (DOTs, MPOs, etc.). The project will result in a document that allows planning agencies to identify the type of integrated model that fits their needs. The study team is using a screening survey to collect information on the state of practice. The survey takes five minutes to fill out and NARC members have been asked to participate.

The Impacts of Congestion on Supply Chains

February 22, 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM ET

Congestion in urban areas heavily impacts supply chains. This webinar will present a methodology to assess the economic impacts of congestion on logistic costs and estimate the direct environmental impacts of urban freight activity. Collecting information to characterize supply chains is a highly complex task, due to the diversity of participants in the logistical operations, and the fact that these participants have a partial view of the system. In designing the methodology, the following objectives guided the process: (1) Applicability, (2) Comparability, (3) Practicality, and (4) Robustness. In order to test the principles developed, pre-pilot studies were conducted in three Latin American Cities: Barranquilla, Colombia; Santiago, Chile; and Sao Paulo, Brazil. Results from these pilot tests will also be discussed.

TREDPLAN Webinar

February 28, 1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

This webinar will cover how shifting long-term patterns of economic activity could change demand, competitive position, vulnerability, and investment requirements for airports, marine ports, rail, and highway systems. Long-range investment strategies are subject to a wide range of risks in this ever-changing world. TREDPLAN is the first and only system in America that provides public agencies and private businesses with a systematic way to understand how a changing economy will affect their planning priorities. The content of this webinar is suitable for decision makers looking to influence and shape long-range and strategic planning as well as shorter term investment prioritization.

Save the date! 51st Annual Conference & Exhibition

June 4-7 - Monterey, CA

Join NARC and the California Association of Councils of Governments for NARC's 51st Annual Conference and Exhibition, which focuses on promoting effective regional cooperation and solutions through interaction and education.

CONTACT US

