

February 18, 2016

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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

CONGRESS BRIEF

Committee Approves Air Traffic Control & FAA Reform Bill

Last week, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) authorization was approved by a vote of 32 to 26 in the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. The full House can now consider the measure that would create a nonprofit corporation for air traffic control services and would authorize **\$51 billion** for the FAA during FY 2017-2019 and \$18 billion for the following three years once the private corporation is created. The current authorization expires on March 31 and with the House on recess this week, it is hard to predict whether a short term extension will be needed.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

Driverless Cars Could Arrive Sooner Than You Think

Following the announcement by the Obama Administration to spend \$4 billion on driverless car technology, the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration has said that “computers can be considered legal drivers of vehicles”. This is the latest step taken to pave the way for the new era of cars that could reduce crashes and improve fuel efficiency. The focus on supporting research and development by the federal government has put pressure on state and national policymakers to establish regulations for when the technology is ready. With federal regulators, automakers, and the technology industry working together, autonomous vehicles could be available as early as 2020.

Scheduled Air Service to Cuba Right Around the Corner

While in Havana this week, Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx and Assistant Secretary of State for Economic and Business Affairs Charles Rivkin signed the agreement for creating air service between the United States and Cuba. Airlines will soon be able to operate 110 daily roundtrip flights to the country. DOT is inviting U.S. air carriers to apply for the opportunity to provide service and hopes to reach a decision this summer on which carriers will offer the service. This is a big step in the Obama Administration’s plan to reestablish diplomatic relations with Cuba.

Amtrak Requests \$1.8B for Fiscal 2017

As part of a five-year plan to improve U.S. passenger railways, Amtrak CEO Joe Boardman requested \$1.8 billion for fiscal year 2017. Boardman stated that Amtrak’s finances have improved and ticket revenues have doubled, but in order to improve the service lawmakers will have to invest. Historically Amtrak receives around \$1 billion per year and recently-approved transportation funding includes \$10 billion over a five-year period for the company. Transportation advocates have encouraged Congress to allow the requested funding.

REGIONS BRIEF

17 Governors Announce Clean Energy, Transportation Agreement

Governors from 17 states created a Governors’ Accord for a New Energy Future this week that calls

for a national shift towards renewable fuels. In addition to creating energy-efficient regional electrical grids and lobbying for additional research, the group plans to pool together buying power to get cheaper clean energy vehicles for state fleets. The states included range from California and New York to Iowa and Hawaii and are planning to discuss the initial steps towards these goals soon.

DVRPC Debuts Interactive Online Tool: Philly Freight Finder

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission recently released their newest version of the *PhillyFreightFinder*, an application that allows users to explore and track the Philadelphia-Camden-Trenton freight network. Users can see information such as the freight facilities near them and the highway performance of freight-hauling trucks. This tool is open-source, making it easy for other regions to replicate the template and provide important freight information for their region.

Ford Leader Discusses the Future of Transportation

During a series of forums hosted by the Mid-America Regional Council in Kansas City, Ford Motor Company Executive Chairman Bill Ford spoke about the changes in transportation. Ford said that the upcoming changes “will be as dramatic as the switch from horses to automobiles” and will affect all of us. He expects that vehicles will do things that haven’t been thought of yet in addition to the changes in usage, such as car sharing.

Dewey Rules Uber and Lyft are Taxis

Dewey Beach, Delaware is the latest city to categorize ridesharing services as taxis, requiring them to pay a fee and obtain a business license. As Uber and Lyft gain popularity, **cities and states** are running into problems on how to regulate them. Opponents to these companies feel they should be regulated like taxis, while the companies advocate that their workers are freelance and shouldn’t have to pay the extra fees.

Study: Pothole Damage Costs Drivers \$3 Billion per Year

A new study by the AAA Automobile Club found that damage from potholes costs U.S. drivers \$3 billion per year. Two-thirds of drivers claim to be worried about pothole damage that can range from tire punctures or bent wheels to more severe suspension damage. AAA stated that most drivers experience damage three times a year and in the last five years 16 million drivers have experienced damage due to potholes. The findings are supporting AAA’s message to Congress for more funding for roads to improve conditions.

JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Communications Specialist

Pima Association of Governments, Tucson, AZ

Planning Program Manager

Rogue Valley Council of Governments, Central Point, OR

Communications Specialist

Wasatch Front Regional Council, Salt Lake City, UT

OPPORTUNITIES

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

BTS Webinar: Using Satellite Accounts to Uncover Transportation’s Role in the Economy

February 23, 1:30 - 3:00 PM ET

The session will provide a look at how industry statistics can provide “big picture” information through Transportation Satellite Accounts (TSAs) and Travel and Tourism Satellite Accounts

(TTSAs). Specifically, it will examine how TSAs capture transportation services provided by for-hire transportation industries, nontransportation industries for their own purposes (e.g., trucks owned and operated by a grocery chain), and transportation carried out by households. The webinar will also discuss how TTSAs bring together information from the National Income and Product Accounts, the industry accounts, and other sources to provide a comprehensive picture of travel and tourism in the U.S.

Pathways to Opportunity: Housing, Transportation, and Social Mobility

February 23, 2:00 – 4:00 PM ET

Two important factors connecting communities to employment, education, and vital services are affordable housing and transportation. While improving proximity and access to jobs alone won't solve social mobility challenges, it can ameliorate problems like segregation, concentrated poverty, and low-density sprawl that pose real barriers to economic progress for low-income families. Join in person or by webcast to hear Brookings Vice President and Director of the Metropolitan Policy Program moderate a conversation between HUD Secretary Julián Castro and Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx. The conversation will be followed by a response panel of experts from metropolitan areas across the country who will discuss local-level impacts.

The New Federal Transportation Bill: What Does It Mean for the Walking Movement?

February 24, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

This webinar will examine the FAST Act legislation passed in December 2015 and discuss ways that traditional and new programs in the legislation can be used by advocates and organizations as they work on active transportation projects at the local, state, and regional level. The webinar will allow participants to hear from experts on what the legislation says and how it can be leveraged for current and future work, followed by a question and answer session.

Automated Vehicles and Policy

March 1, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

The U.S. DOT and the Intelligent Transportation Society of America are hosting a series of webinars on the key issues and opportunities facing the integration of automated vehicles into our transportation system. This webinar will explore the key policy topics and challenges for automated vehicles and discuss what transportation policy makers need to know to adequately consider automation in the future.

Fifth Safe Routes to School National Conference

April 5-7, Columbus, Ohio

Learn how Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs across the nation are changing the habits of an entire generation of school children while improving the health and environment of numerous communities. The fifth national conference will feature workshop sessions, mobile tours, inspirational presentations, and networking opportunities to help you start or expand your SRTS program. This event, which takes place every two years, will once again bring together the wide range of practitioners that are working at the local, regional, state, and national level to make it safe, convenient, and fun for children to walk and bicycle safely to school.

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