



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS



## CONGRESS BRIEF

### MPO Coordination Rule Repeal Bill Passes Senate

Last night, bipartisan legislation to repeal the MPO Coordination Rule introduced by Senators Tammie Duckworth (D-IL), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), and Todd Young (R-IN) passed in the Senate by unanimous consent. The bill had been “hotlined,” which allowed it to proceed without debate and without a vote so long as no Senators raised objections. Now the bill must pass the House where identical legislation was introduced by Dan Lipinski (D-IL). Stay tuned for further updates.

Senator Duckworth’s office issued a [press release](#) on the bill last Friday highlighting the importance of killing the rule and supporting the work of MPOs. It includes quotes from supporting senators and mentions NARC’s endorsement of the bipartisan legislation.

### Funding for Airport

The Airports Council International-North America (ACI-NA), a group that represents commercial airports, released their [Airport Infrastructure Needs: 2017-2021 Report](#) this week, and finds it will cost nearly \$100 billion to expand and repair U.S. airport infrastructure in the next five years. To address this need Representatives Pete DeFazio (D-OR) and Thomas Massie (R-KY) have authored a bill that would remove the cap on the passenger facility charge (PFC) that airports can apply to each airline ticket. Airlines oppose the proposal stating that it would discourage flying, but ACI-NA sees it as a way for individual airports to assess their needs without requiring additional federal investment. The cap is currently set at \$4.50 per enplanement.

### Senate Panel Considers How to Fund Trump’s \$1T Infrastructure Package

In a hearing before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies yesterday, lawmakers discussed funding for a potential infrastructure package. Lawmakers agreed that it is going to take a variety of funding sources to pass a \$1 trillion investment. Some of the options discussed include: user fees for vehicles miles traveled, reallocating Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund revenue, and imposing a driver’s license

surcharge. The most talked about source yesterday was raising the federal gas tax. Additionally, Transportation for America testified and emphasized the importance of TIGER grants, which could be on the chopping block.

## **ADMINISTRATION BRIEF**

### **Trump Begins Infrastructure Plan Meetings**

The president held a White House meeting yesterday to begin crafting the much-talked-about infrastructure plan. Trump said that he wants to pressure states to streamline local permitting and prioritize projects that are shovel ready. He would give states 90 days to start a project and asked EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to provide a recommendation for moving forward. Little was mentioned of local projects and prioritization in the reports after the meeting, but preference is clearly leaning toward significant state control. The president expressed interest in high-speed rail and asked for more information on the Hyperloop. The White House is also considering a repatriation tax holiday that would generate \$200 billion in funding to help pay for the plan and expects to address infrastructure once health care and tax law reform are completed.

### **Metropolitan Pedestrian and Bicycle Planning Handbook**

This FHWA handbook provides MPOs with examples and information on including pedestrian and bicycle transportation in their planning activities. It includes several case studies and steps for effectively developing a metropolitan transportation plan that considers pedestrians and bicyclists.

### **Number 2 at DOT Nominated**

Jeffrey Rosen has been chosen as the deputy secretary under Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao at USDOT. Rosen previously worked as general counsel for both USDOT and the Office of Management and Budget. He is currently a senior partner at Kirkland & Ellis LLP.

## **REGIONS BRIEF**

### **Uber Now Applying for Self-Driving Car Permit in California**

After a standoff with state regulators, Uber is applying for a self-driving test permit in California. In December, hours after launching their expanded self-driving car program in San Francisco, Uber was ordered to halt rides because they lacked a permit. Once Uber receives a permit, the cars must be guided manually and can only be used for mapping purposes. Approximately twenty companies have already sought and received permits from the Department of Motor Vehicles to test autonomous technology in California.

### **USDOT Fact Sheets on the Connected Vehicle Pilot Deployment Sites**

Three new fact sheets on the New York City, Tampa, and Wyoming Connected Vehicle Pilot Deployment Programs have been released. The fact sheets provide an overview of each of the pilot deployment sites, including the transportation challenges that exist in each location. They also discuss the deployment approach, connected vehicle applications, partnerships, and expected benefits for each pilot site.

## **JOBS**

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

### **Director of Public & Government Affairs**

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Columbus, OH

### **AirCheck Texas Administrative Assistant**

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

### **Administrative Assistant**

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

### **Outreach Coordinator**

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

### **Regional Planner**

Houston-Galveston Area Council, Houston, TX

**Director of Transportation Alternatives Planning**  
Miami Valley Regional Planning Commission, Dayton, OH

**Economic Development Planning Program Manager**  
Northeast Ohio Four County Regional Planning and Development Organization, Akron, OH

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

***View full list of grants and events!***

### **Variable Speed Limits Systems: Are They for Everyone?**

April 4, 1:00 – 2:30 PM ET

Variable speed limits (VSL) systems use information on traffic speed, occupancy, and volume detection, weather, and road surface condition to determine appropriate speeds at which drivers should be traveling, given current roadway and traffic conditions. The use of VSL during less than ideal conditions, such as traffic and weather conditions, can improve safety by decreasing the risks associated with traveling at speeds that are higher than appropriate for the conditions and by reducing speed variance in traffic. This webinar will present recent research results on state of the practice of VSL systems through comprehensive literature review and agency interviews, particularly on experiences from deployments in the U.S., and insights and best practices from the following perspectives: planning and policy, design, deployment, standards, operations and maintenance, and outcomes.

### **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**

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