



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGIONAL COUNCILS

TRANSPORTATION THURSDAYS

CONGRESS BRIEF

Republicans Mull Cutting Omnibus Funds Under Little-Used Law

President Trump and House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) are reportedly contemplating spending cuts in the recently approved omnibus package. There is a lesser-used provision of the **1974 Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act** that allows the president to formally request Congress to rescind some of the budget authority it laid out in the omnibus. Under this provision, the president would submit to Congress the specific appropriations that the administration does not want to pay for, how much funding to cut, and the rationale behind the decision. Congress would have 45 legislative days to approve all or part of the request. Such a proposal could pass the House but would be a tougher sell in the Senate, though there is some disagreement about whether such a bill would require 60 votes.

ADMINISTRATION BRIEF

White House Infrastructure Expert Set to Leave

DJ Gribbin, who helped develop the administration's infrastructure plan and is the point person for infrastructure policy, has announced plans to leave his position. No date has been set for his departure, but the announcement comes while the infrastructure package is stalled in Congress. Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) would prefer to pass smaller bills rather than one large package, and last week the president acknowledged that action on the infrastructure plan is unlikely to occur before the November midterm elections.

EPA & NHTSA: GHG Emissions Standards for Cars and Light Trucks Should Be Revised

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt announced this week the administration's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions standards and Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards. The agency will use a joint process with the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) to develop a notice and comment rulemaking process. The original Midterm Evaluation Determination for model years 2022-2025, released in January 2017, found that automakers were well-positioned to meet standards. However, car makers felt the process was rushed and urged the Trump administration to reconsider.

NHTSA Proposes to Retain Corporate Average Fuel Economy Penalty Rate

In other CAFE news, NHTSA issued a **notice of proposed rulemaking** in the Federal Register on Monday to retain the existing penalty rate applicable to automobile manufacturers that fail to meet Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards. Penalties are paid by auto manufacturers that exceed the allowable fuel economy targets under the CAFE program and the penalty was set to go from \$5.50 to \$14.00 beginning with Model Year 2019. The notice asks for comment on one element of the CAFE penalty program, the penalty rate, and allows stakeholders to provide input and additional information.

EPA Submits Drinking Water Assessment to Congress

Last week, EPA submitted its sixth *Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment* to Congress. The agency is mandated by the *Safe Drinking Water Act* to submit this report every four years. The survey results are used to calculate Drinking Water State Revolving Fund grants for states. Overall, the survey showed that \$472.6 billion is needed to maintain and improve

America's drinking water infrastructure over the next 20 years (a 23 percent increase since the release of the last survey in 2013). This includes an estimated:

- \$312.6 billion to replace/refurbish aging or deteriorating pipes;
- \$83 billion to construct, expand, or rehabilitate infrastructure to reduce contamination;
- \$47.6 billion to construct, rehabilitate, or cover water storage reservoirs; and
- \$21.8 billion to construct or rehabilitate intake structures, wells, and spring collectors.

REGIONS BRIEF

Ohio Transit Union Launches Anti-AV Campaign

Bus drivers in Columbus, Ohio distributed flyers last month advocating that driverless vehicles should have operators on board – a direct response to the potential use of automated buses in the future. Operators urged riders to call Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther. The union is worried because the Smart Columbus initiative is exploring new transportation technology that they believe will cause job losses in their industry. The transit authority's spokesperson said they have no immediate plan to use autonomous buses.

JOBS

[View full list of jobs!](#)

Environmental Planner/Engineer

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, Detroit, MI

Principal Transportation Planner

Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission, Manchester, NH

Executive Director

MetroPlan Orlando, Orlando, FL

OPPORTUNITIES

[View full list of opportunities!](#)

National Work Zone Awareness Week

April 9 – 13

Each year in the spring, National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW) is held to bring national attention to motorist and worker safety and mobility issues in work zones. The 2018 National Work Zone Awareness Week will be hosted by the State of Illinois, with a national kick-off event scheduled for Tuesday, April 10. In addition to the annual national event, many states host their own NWZAW events.

TAM Refresher II

April 25, 2:00 – 3:00 PM ET

This webinar will provide an update on the development of TAM standards and recommended practices as well as APTA's Transit Performance Management Subcommittee activities and priorities. It will also review the deliverables and highlight the technical assistance resources available to assist in implementation ahead of the October 2018 TAM Plan deadline.

USDOT R&E Grants Program

Applications Due: May 22

The USDOT Restoration and Enhancement (R&E) Program provides operating assistance to initiate, restore, or enhance intercity passenger rail transportation. Eligible projects include operating expenses associated with intercity passenger rail service, such as staffing costs, diesel fuel or electricity costs, station costs, lease payments on rolling stock, routine planned maintenance costs, host railroad costs, train yard operation costs, and administrative costs. USDOT is expected to award one grant that could total \$4,796,500.

