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January 2019 Insights

Infrastructure

There is continued interest in an infrastructure bill. Key Advocates made the rounds with key committee staff this month and privately they are all saying that they expect something to happen next year. Publicly, all of the comments by various key principals support infrastructure as a priority. For example, the Department of Transportation, which has the lead on the infrastructure issue for the Administration, said that the President is prepared to spend “buckets of money” on an infrastructure plan and that there is “room for agreement with Democrats.” On Nov. 28, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee held a hearing on surface transportation needs that Chairman Barasso said “serves as a preview of debate on the mega infrastructure bill.”

Testifying were the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, the Associated General Contractors of America, and the Sacramento Area Council of Governments. Also, there has been talk about the possibility of raising the gas tax to help fund infrastructure. The soon-to-be Senate Commerce Chairman Roger Wicker said that if President Trump goes public with what he has said privately and endorses an increase, “I would listen to the President and consider his point of view.” Lastly in the Senate, we mentioned before that Majority Leader McConnell listed infrastructure as one of the Republican’s top three priorities for the new Congress. Along those lines, Senator Schumer, the Minority Leader, said that “In the next Congress, Democrats have to force the infrastructure issue. An infrastructure bill in the new Congress could be one of the first opportunities we get. We intend to take it.” On the House side, key stakeholders continue to weigh in on the issue. Most recently, the AFL-CIO came out in support of Congressman Earl Blumenauer’s push to create an infrastructure subcommittee on Ways and Means. In its press release, the union wrote: “The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee — the authorization committee for us policy geeks — has correctly focused its energies on how to spend existing resources. But expanding the pool of revenues that we know are needed will require Congressional tax writers to be focused on solving this problem as well.”

Earmarks

There is also continued support for the return of earmarks. Recently, incoming T&I Chair, Congressman DeFazio, reiterated his disappointment with the Republicans’ “nonsensical” ban on earmarks. “Do we think that all of the wisdom on how to better serve your district and your state comes from the DOT in D.C. or your state DOT? No,” he said, pointing to his support to allow “congressionally directed spending in a fully transparent way.” As previously reported, the House Republicans have decided punt on the question of whether to end the ban on earmarks, instead letting Democrats take the first step next year. Congressman Mike Rogers was expected to introduce a proposal to undo the earmark moratorium at a closed-door GOP meeting last month but restoring the practice of directing spending toward specific projects never came up.

It's not clear how Democrats will approach the issue come January. Incoming Majority Leader Hoyer has drafted an earmark proposal not yet public and recently Congressman David Price, who would take the Appropriations Transportation-HUD Subcommittee gavel next Congress, said that he would back the return of earmarks.

Other Bills

For the current Congress there were a number of bills the Coalition has had either direct involvement in their formulation and/or have continued to monitor developments. These include bills authored by Members McNerney, DeFazio, Blumenauer, Boozman-Feinstein, Reed-Carbajal, Huffman, Ellison, etc. Whether or not these bills get introduced in the new Congress is not clear. Some may not, deferring to the Leadership and the key committees on the infrastructure issue. Some may, if Members want to “stake out” their position on an infrastructure plan.

FY 19 Federal Funding Generally

Congress recessed without passing a Continuing Resolution to fund the government beyond Dec. 21, thereby causing a government shutdown. The lapse in appropriations affects 25 percent of the Federal government, including funding for the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Justice, Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Treasury, State, and Homeland Security, as well as the Food and Drug Administration, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the federal judiciary, and other related government programs. That includes the Interior (SRF funding) and Transportation Appropriations Bills which are currently in conference. It does not include the Energy and Water Appropriations Bill (Corps of Engineers) which was signed into law on Sept. 21.

FY19 Interior Appropriations Bills

The Senate version contains higher appropriations for CWSRF and WIFIA than the House version. Specifically, the House bill contains lower numbers (\$1.34 for the CWSRF and \$900M for the SDWSRF) than the Senate despite the FY19 raised budget caps. The Senate has the same numbers as for FY18, which are \$1.694B for the CWSRF and \$1.16B for the SDWSRF. The House provides \$75M for WIFIA and the Senate \$63M.

FY19 Transportation Appropriations Bills

Even though both the House and Senate bills have not been passed, they are in conference with funding levels that are not far apart.

Program	FY'17 Enacted	FY'18 Enacted	House Committee-Passed FY'19 Bill	Final Senate 19 Bill
Highway Program	\$43.26B	\$47.5BB	\$50.3B	\$48.57B
BUILD/TIGER Grants	\$500M	\$1.5B	\$750M	\$1B
FTA CIG Grants - New Starts/Small Starts/Core Capacity	\$2.41B	\$2.65B	\$2.61B	\$2.6B
FTA Formula Grants	\$9.73B	\$10.5B	\$10.7B	\$10.7B

FTA WMATA	\$150M	\$150M	\$150M	\$150M
FAA Airport Improvement Program (AIP)	\$3.35B	\$4.35B	\$3.85B	\$4.1B
Amtrak NEC	\$328M	\$650M	\$650M	\$650M
Amtrak National Network	\$1.16B	\$1.29B	\$1.29B	\$1.29B
FRA CRISI Grants	\$68M	\$593M	\$300M	\$255M
FRA SOGR Grants	\$25M	\$250M	\$500M	\$300M
FRA Restoration Grants	\$5M	\$20M	\$0	\$10M

Bill Tracking

All legislation not passed by the end of the 115th Congress dies and must be reintroduced in the next Congress.

H.R.434 — 115th Congress (2017-2018) **New WATER Act Sponsor:** Rep. Denham, Jeff [R-CA-10] (Introduced 01/11/2017) **Cosponsors:** (9) **Committees:** House - Natural Resources

Status Update: no change since the last report.

H.R.23 — 115th Congress (2017-2018) **Gaining Responsibility on Water Act of 2017 Sponsor:** Rep. Valadao, David G. [R-CA-21] (Introduced 01/03/2017) **Cosponsors:** (14) **Committees:** House - Natural Resources, Agriculture **Latest Action:** Passed House on July 12.

Status Update: no change since the last report.

H.R.465 — 115th Congress (2017-2018) **To amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to provide for an integrated planning and permitting process, and for other purposes. Sponsor:** Rep. Gibbs, Bob [R-OH-7] (Introduced 01/12/2017) **Cosponsors:** (1, now 8) **Committees:** House - Transportation and Infrastructure

Status Update: no change since the last report.

H.R.547 — 115th Congress (2017-2018) **National Infrastructure Development Bank of 2017 Sponsor:** Rep. DeLauro, Rosa L. [D-CT-3] (Introduced 01/13/2017) **Cosponsors:** (73, now 86) **Committees:** House - Energy and Commerce, Transportation and Infrastructure, Financial Services, Ways and Means

Status Update: no change since the last report.

H.R.2479 — 115th Congress (2017-2018) **Leading Infrastructure for Tomorrow's America Act Sponsor:** Rep. Pallone, Frank, Jr. [D-NJ-6] (Introduced 05/17/2017) **Cosponsors:** (25) **Committees:** House - Energy and Commerce, Science, Space, and Technology, Transportation and Infrastructure, Ways and Means, Natural Resources

Status Update: no change since the last report.

H.R.100 — 115th Congress (2017-2018)

Support Local Transportation Act

Sponsor: Rep. Brownley, Julia [D-CA-26] (Introduced 01/03/2017) **Cosponsors:** (0, now 2)

Committees: House - Transportation and Infrastructure

Status Update: no change since the last report.

H.R.481 — 115th Congress (2017-2018)

REBUILD Act

Sponsor: Rep. Calvert, Ken [R-CA-42] (Introduced 01/12/2017) **Cosponsors:** (0)

Committees: House - Natural Resources

Status Update: no change since the last report.

H.R.966 — 115th Congress (2017-2018)

TIGER CUBS Act

Sponsor: Rep. Larsen, Rick [D-WA-2] (Introduced 02/07/2017) **Cosponsors:** (5, now 8)

Committees: House - Appropriations, Budget.

Status Update: no change since the last report.

S.846 — 115th Congress (2017-2018)

SAFE Bridges Act of 2017

Sponsor: Sen. Shaheen, Jeanne [D-NH] (Introduced 04/05/2017) **Cosponsors:** (4)

Committees: Senate - Environment and Public Works

Status Update: no change since the last report.

H.R.1670 — 115th Congress (2017-2018)

Infrastructure 2.0 Act

Sponsor: Rep. Delaney, John K. [D-MD-6] (Introduced 03/22/2017) **Cosponsors:** (21)

Committees: House - Ways and Means, Transportation and Infrastructure, Rules

Status Update: no change since the last report.

H.R.1669 — 115th Congress (2017-2018)

Partnership to Build America Act of 2017

Sponsor: Rep. Delaney, John K. [D-MD-6] (Introduced 03/22/2017) **Cosponsors:** (23, now 27)

Committees: House - Transportation and Infrastructure, Ways and Means

Status Update: no change since the last report.

S.1756 — 115th Congress (2017-2018)

Rebuild America Now Act

Sponsor: Sen. Sullivan, Dan [R-AK] (Introduced 08/03/2017) **Cosponsors:** (11)

Committees: Senate - Environment and Public Works

Status Update: no change since the last report.