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SFAA Ready to Go for Infrastructure Push in House and Senate

An infrastructure bill from the House perspective would include a large funding package, followed by a five-year reauthorization of the Highway Act. The House Democrats say that the bill will address climate change and new technologies. Floor time has been reserved for infrastructure in May.

In the Senate, an infrastructure bill is another five-year surface transportation reauthorization bill. The leadership of the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee has asked Committee members to submit their priorities for the elements of such a bill by April 4. Financing or spending will not be considered in EPW.

Congress is in recess this week, and when they return, crunch time will start immediately for infrastructure in both chambers. SFAA has retained Capitol Counsel to enhance our representation in Congress as we seek to include a bonding requirement in the Transportation Infrastructure Financing and Innovation Act (TIFIA) program. The firm is one of the largest in Washington, D.C., and has 36 lobbyists in the firm, several of whom have close working relationships on transportation and infrastructure issues in Congress, the federal agencies and the Administration. They will play a vital role for us in interacting with the Members of Congress and their staff on the key committees that will consider changes to TIFIA, starting with the meetings needed immediately in the next two weeks when
Congress reconvenes. SFAA’s Federal Affairs Subcommittee is coordinating meetings with members of Congress, the DOT and other trade associations to support bonding in any legislation.

States Not Waiting for Congress on Infrastructure

- In Alabama’s special session on infrastructure funding, the legislature passed a spending bill that includes a ten-cent increase to the state gas tax to be implemented over three years. Going forward, the gas tax would be adjusted for inflation. The increase is estimated to raise $320 million per year for road projects.
- In West Virginia, the legislature passed a bill to create a Special Road Repair Fund to provide funding for maintenance on secondary roads. The bill authorizes transferring up to $80 million per year from the State Road Fund into this new account.
- Minnesota’s Governor proposed borrowing nearly $1.3 billion for repairing transportation infrastructure, buildings on college campuses, and to build affordable housing.
- Massachusetts’ House Speaker is seeking legislation that would provide for $1 billion in spending on green infrastructure projects.
- Wyoming enacted an electronic vehicle registration fee increase.

Bills of Interest in the States

- In Colorado, legislation passed the Senate that would require public-private partnerships to be bonded.
- Prevailing wage legislation is on the Governor’s desk in Maryland that allows workers to file a lawsuit if they are underpaid. This is in addition to the current remedy through the Labor Commissioner’s office. The bill provides that the contractor and subcontractor may be jointly liable for any of the subcontractor’s obligations under the prevailing wage law.
- An agreement has been reached in North Dakota not to raise the state bond threshold to $250,000, and to give local governments more flexibility in the use of architects and engineers.
- Arkansas enacted a reciprocal licensing law under which individuals and business entities can get an expedited license if they have a substantially similar license in another state. New entrants must pay the Arkansas license fee and comply with bonding and insurance requirements.
advisory organization in all states and it has been designated by state insurance departments as a statistical agent for the reporting of fidelity and surety experience.