



Transportation/Aviation Update
May 16, 2025

NEXT WEEK

House

At this time, there are no transportation events in the House next week.

Senate

Markup: FRA Administrator Nomination. On May 21, the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee will vote on the nomination of David Fink to be the next Federal Railroad Administrator. The Committee announcement of the markup is [here](#).

THIS WEEK

House

Hearing: FY 2026 DOT Budget. On May 14, the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Subcommittee held a hearing on the FY 2026 budget for the Department of Transportation. Secretary Sean Duffy was the sole witness. Hearing video can be accessed [here](#).

Hearing: FAA Reauthorization Implementation. On May 15, the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a hearing titled “FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024: An Update on Implementation One Year Later.” Witnesses included representatives from the FAA and Government Accountability Office. Video of the hearing is [here](#).

- Chairman Rep. Sam Graves (R-MO) highlighted the \$12.5 billion recently approved by the Committee to jump start air traffic control improvements, which is in the House budget reconciliation bill that will be voted next week.
- Ranking Democrat Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA) highlighted the effort to modernize the air traffic control system,, saying “just last week, the Secretary announced a proposal that will help fund the modernization of new ATC facilities, systems and equipment. We have yet to receive a proposed budget for this proposal and such an important and costly plan will require vigorous oversight, but I do encourage Committee members to look at what the Secretary is proposing because I believe that it is a very positive step forward.”

Hearing: FY 2026 TSA Budget. On May 15, the Homeland Security Appropriations Subcommittee held a hearing on the FY 2026 budget for the Transportation Security Administration. Acting TSA Administrator Ha Nguyen McNeill was the sole witness. Hearing video can be accessed [here](#).

Senate

Hearing: FRA Administrator Nomination. On May 13, the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee held a hearing on the nomination of David Fink to be the next Federal Railroad Administrator. Until recently Mr. Fink was CEO of Pan Am Railways, a short line railroad in New England. His responses to the Committee questionnaire is [here](#). Video of the hearing is [here](#).

- Rail safety was a focus of the hearing, as Senators questioned Mr. Fink on the FRA safety investigations of Pan Am Railways and the company’s response.



- Mr. Fink said he wants the FRA to be a partner in advancing safety technology that the rail industry has been developing and, in his questionnaire, said he wants to axe “outdated” regulations. He also argued that FRA has “taken on a significantly larger role as a grant administrator” and it’s important to “rebalance priorities” so “safety remains at the forefront.”

Hearing: FHWA Administrator Nomination. On May 14, the Environment and Public Works Committee held a hearing on the nomination of Sean McMaster to be the next Federal Highway Administrator. During the first Trump Administration, he served as Deputy Chief of Staff and Deputy Assistant Secretary for Congressional Affairs. He also worked on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the office of former Representative John Mica (R-FL). Information on the hearing is [here](#).

- Mr. McMaster said he wants to join Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy’s anti-regulatory crusade, saying it will help the government build roads and bridges quickly and cheaply.

Hearing: Implementation of the FAA Reauthorization. On May 14, the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee held a hearing titled “FAA Reauthorization One Year Later: Aviation Safety, Air Traffic, and Next Generation Technology”. Witnesses included representatives from the FAA Air Traffic organization and the FAA Offices of Airports and Office of Aviation Safety. Additional information is [here](#).

Hearing: FY 2026 DOT Budget. On May 14, the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Subcommittee held a hearing on the FY 2026 budget for the Department of Transportation. Secretary Sean Duffy was the sole witness. Hearing video can be accessed [here](#).

- Committee Chair Sen. Susan Collins (R-ME) in discussing the problems with the FAA air traffic control system, raised the possibility funding the overhaul using emergency funding, which would not be subject to any spending caps.
- Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy reiterated his desire for the full cost of modernization be done at the outset, avoiding annual piecemeal funding.
- Ranking Democrat Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA) challenged Secretary Duffy on the delay in executing grants, blaming it on the fact the Trump administration has pushed out some 5,000 people and created more delays by imposing new priorities.

Department of Transportation

FTA: Bus Grants NOFO. On May 15, FTA issued a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Low and No Emission and Bus and Bus Facilities grant programs. In FY 2025, approximately \$400 million is authorized for the Buses and Bus Facilities Program and \$1.1 billion is authorized for the Low or No Emission Program. The NOFO highlights the requirement that transit agencies to describe how their projects will “improve the accessibility of transportation for families with young children, with a focus on improved access to jobs, healthcare and retail.” The Bus and Bus Facilities NOFO is [here](#) and the Low-No NOFO is [here](#). Applications are due July 14.

- In the announcement, Transportation Secretary Duff said “American commuters don’t want to pay for deranged, leftist DEI mandates that don’t improve the efficiency of their daily commutes. They care about getting home safely and quickly to the families they are working so hard to provide for. At FTA, we stripped the unnecessary and wasteful woke requirements our transit manufacturing system was burdened by under the last administration so American manufacturers can focus on building big, beautiful transit systems for American families to reach their destinations safely and efficiently.”