



**Transportation/Aviation Update**  
November 15, 2019

*Steven O. Palmer, Vice President*  
*David Haines, Director*

---

**NEXT WEEK**

House

***Floor Vote: FY 2020 Continuing Resolution.*** Next week, before the current Continuing Resolution (CR) expires on November 21, the House will vote on a second CR for FY 2020 that will fund the federal government through December 20.

***Hearing: Small Business Opportunities in Infrastructure.*** On November 19, the Committee on Small Business will hold a hearing to examine advancements in smart construction technology and opportunities for small business in improving the nation's infrastructure. Witnesses will include representatives from the American Society of Civil Engineers, Cold Spring Construction, Trimble, and STACK Construction Technologies. Information on the hearing is [here](#).

Senate

***Hearing: Automated Vehicles.*** On Wednesday, November 20, the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation will hold a hearing entitled "Highly Automated Vehicles: Federal Perspectives on the Deployment of Safety Technology." Witnesses will include Robert Sumwalt, Chairman, National Transportation Safety Board, Joel Szabat, Acting Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy, U.S. Department of Transportation, and Dr. James Owens, Acting Administrator, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Witnesses have been asked to offer their insights into what is needed to realize the safety, mobility, and efficiency benefits of automated vehicles. Information on the hearing will be posted [here](#).

**THIS WEEK**

House

***Hearing: Amtrak's Future.*** On November 13, the Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a hearing entitled "Amtrak Now and into the Future." Witnesses included Richard Anderson, CEO of Amtrak, and representatives from the Oregon State Legislature, Transportation Trades Department of AFL-CIO, San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority, Transportation Communications Union, Rail passengers Association, and Sheet Metal Air Rail



Transportation – Rail Division. Full Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio expressed his support for a national passenger rail system and rejected the current law requirement that Amtrak eliminate operating losses. Amtrak’s CEO outlined five priorities that need to be addressed in the next surface transportation bill, including safety, predictable funding, on-time performance, intercity and short-haul transportation are met demands, and intercity passenger rail goals. Information on the hearing is [here](#).

**Roundtable: Air Travel for Persons with Disabilities.** On November 14, the Aviation Subcommittee of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held a roundtable to hear from stakeholders on air travel for persons with disabilities. Participants included representatives from DOT, TSA, Airports Council International, National Disability Rights Network, All Wheels Up, and Paralyzed Veterans of America. Issues discussed included in-cabin wheelchair restraint systems, security screening procedures, and service animals. The roundtable was not webcast.

#### Senate

**Named: DHS Secretary and Deputy Secretary.** The Senate voted 54-41 on November 14 to confirm Chad Wolf to be the Undersecretary for Strategy, Policy, and Plans at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). He was then named the Acting DHS Secretary. His bio published by DHS is [here](#). On Wednesday, Ken Cuccinelli, the Acting Director of the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services was named to be the Acting DHS Deputy Secretary. Mr. Cuccinelli’s bio is [here](#). He replaces David Pekoske, who returns to his position as Administrator of the Transportation Security Administration.

**Markup: Nominations and Transit-Oriented Development.** On November 13, the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee approved on voice vote S. 2805, the TOD Advancement Act of 2019 and several nominations, sending them to the full Senate:

- S. [2805](#), the *TOD Advancement Act of 2019*. This legislation would extend until December 2021 loan and loan guarantee authority to December 2021 for transit-oriented development (TOD) adjacent to passenger rail stations or multimodal stations.
- Nomination of Michael Graham to be a Member of the National Transportation Safety Board
- Nomination of Carl Bentzel to be a Member of the Federal Maritime Commission
- Nomination of Todd Rokita, a former Member of Congress from Indiana, to be a Member of the Amtrak Board of Directors.

#### Department of Transportation

**FHWA: Bridge Inspections.** On November 12, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) to update the National Bridge Inspection Standards. As mandated by Congress in MAP-21 in 2012, the FHWA is proposing to update the bridge inspection standards, to incorporate technological advancements including the use of unmanned aerial systems, and to address ambiguities identified since the last update to the regulation in 2009. The NPRM is [here](#).



**FTA: Rail Transit Grade Safety.** On November 12, the Federal Transit Administration issued a Safety Bulletin on the “Safety Considerations Associated with Rail Transit Grade Crossings.” The Bulletin highlights the actions taken by FTA and to address rail grade crossing safety. The Bulletin is [here](#).

**DOT: BUILD Grant Awards.** On November 12, DOT announced the award of \$900 million in BUILD grants. The awards went to 55 projects in 35 states. The list of projects receiving BUILD grant funds is [here](#).

**FHWA: State Highway Funding.** FHWA released data illustrating how much states will lose from the \$7.6 billion funding rescission mandated by the FAST Act that will take effect at the end of fiscal year 2020. The FHWA data is [here](#).

###