



Transportation/Aviation Update

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NEXT WEEK

Senate

No transportation related hearings are currently scheduled.

House

The House of Representatives will return to legislative session on Monday, May 11. As of today, no transportation related hearings are currently scheduled. The House is expected to begin consideration of the next COVID-19 supplemental relief legislation. The bill is currently being drafted and has not been made public.

THIS WEEK

Senate

Hearing: Aviation Industry and COVID-19. On May 6, the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation held a [hearing](#) on the “State of the Aviation Industry: Examining the Impact of COVID-19.” Witnesses included representatives of the American Association of Airport Executives, Airlines for America, Aerospace Industries Association. Issues discussed at the hearing included:

- the airport industry request for another \$10 billion to help offset losses;
- whether airlines should be compelled to provide air service, as required by Congress in the CARES Act, in light of diminished passenger levels;
- whether airlines were going to provide refunds to every passenger who has requested one; and
- what the airline industry is doing to ensure the protection of passengers and employees, including whether standards for wearing masks should be voluntary or mandated by the federal government.

Department of Transportation

FRA: Passenger Rail Grants Awarded. On May 5, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced the [award](#) of more than \$22 million in grant funding to three projects that span eight states. Funding is provided through FRA’s Restoration and Enhancement grants program to initiate, restore, or enhance intercity passenger rail service around the country. All three grants will be awarded to projects located in Opportunity Zones.



FTA: Guidance on Chinese Rolling Stock. On May 7, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) issued [Guidance](#) through several Frequently Asked Questions. In the FY 2020 defense authorization bill, Congress enacted a prohibition on using FTA funds to purchase “rolling stock” but delayed the effective date for two years. Under the FTA guidance, agencies can execute a contract with a company like CRRC or BYD, both Chinese government affiliated entities, through Dec. 19, 2021 and use federal funds for the purchase of buses or trains. But after that date, no federal funds can go towards such contracts.

Transportation Security Administration

TSA: Masks Required for Screeners. On May 6, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) announced that all TSA employees must wear masks while working in airport screening checkpoint areas.

Separately, on May 6, the Airlines for America, the airlines trade groups, asked TSA to impose a mandate that all passengers wear masks, to “ensure needed consistency for the duration of the passenger journey and instill greater confidence for the traveling public that the airlines, airports and federal government are prioritizing their health and safety.”

Other

Amtrak: Passenger Masks Required. On May 7, Amtrak announced that all passengers on its trains and at train stations would be required to wear masks, starting next week.

COVID-19 Supplemental Request - Transit. This week, the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) submitted to Congress a request of \$23.8 billion to enable transit systems to continue to operate through 2020. Congress provided \$25 billion to public transit in the CARES Act.

COVID-19 Supplemental Request - Airports. This week, the American Association of Airport Executives, during testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee, said airports need another \$10 billion to help airports continue to function during the coronavirus public health crisis. Congress previously provided \$10 billion to airports in the CARES Act.

COVID-19 Supplemental Request – State DOTs. Last month, the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) submitted a request to Congress for \$50 billion in direct emergency assistance to state departments of transportation experiencing a dramatic decrease in revenues due to the nationwide response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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