



International Right of Way Association Weekly Update

Monday, March 25, 2019

Trump Administration

- Special Counsel Mueller gave his final report to Attorney General Barr on Friday. On Sunday, Barr publicly released his summary of the Special Counsel's findings. The new talking points for each Party were on clear display after Barr released his summary—Republicans claim an exoneration of the President and Democrats demand that Barr give Congress the report and any associated evidence. Reactions and fallout from the first public information of the nearly-two-year-long investigation will dominate the attention in DC this week.
- The President stated on Friday that he wants to work with congressional Democrats on an infrastructure deal, noting that he's spoken to Speaker Pelosi about the issue.
<https://www.cnn.com/2019/03/22/trump-says-he-and-pelosi-are-still-talking-about-infrastructure-deal.html>

Congress

- Both Chambers are in session this week.
- On Wednesday, Transportation Secretary Chao will testify on the Administration's fiscal year 2020 budget request before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies.
<https://www.appropriations.senate.gov/hearings/review-of-the-fy2020-budget-request-for-the-us-department-of-transportation>
- Also on Wednesday, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation will testify before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies.
<https://appropriations.house.gov/legislation/hearings/budget-us-army-corps-of-engineers-and-bureau-of-reclamation>

Analysis

- There are two separate tracks of activity between the Administration and Congress right now—the ongoing investigations by House Democrats into the Administration and the President's actions and the desire to legislate. These activities are not necessarily directly contradictory but the investigations will make it more difficult to legislate in two

respects. First, the investigations will impact the mood between the Administration and Congress and cloud the relationships needed to present a unified position on legislative matters. Second, there is a finite amount of time and resources available to legislate this year. The more attention that is dedicated to investigatory work, the less attention that will be available to push legislation.

- Based on reactions to the conclusions of Special Counsel's report and the release of Barr's summary, it is clear that investigations of President Trump will continue. While it is encouraging that the President and Committee leaders on Capitol Hill are saying the right things about infrastructure, it will take much more than that to reach the consensus required to enact such legislation.