



International Right of Way Association Weekly Update

Monday, April 29, 2019

Trump Administration

- The President will meet with Speaker Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Schumer on Tuesday to discuss infrastructure legislation.

Congress

- Both Chambers are in session this week.
- House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR) will tour the Gateway Tunnel project on Thursday and Friday.

Analysis

- This could be the critical week that determines whether infrastructure legislation has a possibility of moving this year. A best-case scenario for the meeting between the President, Pelosi, and Schumer would be that they agree on a top-line funding number, generally what the scope of the legislation should cover, and how to pay for it. A worst-case scenario would be that infrastructure is only discussed in a cursory manner and that the meeting then moves to the ongoing congressional investigations into the Administration.
- How close the outcome of the meeting is to either of these two extremes will give us a sense of the odds of congressional action on infrastructure.
- Senate Majority Leader McConnell stated that any new infrastructure funding must not increase the deficit and must have a pay-for (i.e., a tax increase of some form or a cut to other government spending to offset increased infrastructure spending).
- Chairman DeFazio's visit to the Gateway Tunnel project is also significant for two reasons. First, it highlights the importance of one of the most politically divisive infrastructure projects in the country—one that the President and Schumer have both focused on repeatedly. Second, DeFazio has stated that he plans to have project-specific authorizations in his infrastructure legislation. This would be a departure from the earmark-free bills passed in the last decade and could be an attempt to bypass any Administrative control over funding decisions for key, high-profile projects such as the Gateway Tunnel project.