



International Right of Way Association Weekly Update

Monday, April 17, 2017

Trump Administration

- President Trump refused to set a deadline for enactment of comprehensive tax reform in an interview that aired on Wednesday morning. Treasury Secretary Mnuchin had previously set an August deadline for the package. (<http://fortune.com/2017/04/12/donald-trump-tax-reform-stock-market/>)
- The Dakota access pipeline, which, as articulated in previous weekly updates, has been the subject of significant presidential attention, will begin interstate crude transportation next month, according to paperwork filed last week with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. (<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/328832-dakota-access-pipeline-to-start-interstate-service-may-14>)

Congress

- The House and Senate are in recess this week and will return the week of the 24th. Funding for the federal government expires on April 28th, so Congress will have only a few days to finalize a spending package to keep the government open. (<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/04/government-shutdown-mitch-mcconnell-chuck-schumer-237001>)

Analysis

- The Administration has not yet committed to a specific legislative strategy for its infrastructure proposal. In fact, at an event last week hosted by the Wall Street Journal and attended by a Nossaman expert, the President's special assistant for infrastructure policy, DJ Gribbin, confirmed that the Administration had not finalized plans regarding the timing for release or the specific way that the infrastructure proposal would be paid for. Under typical congressional budgeting, bills that increase government spending must be paid for or offset, or else the bill will be subject to procedures that may delay passage.
- One of the logical ways to pay for such an infrastructure proposal would be through comprehensive tax reform. The fact that the President is refusing to put a timeline on a tax reform package could mean that the timing of an infrastructure proposal will further slip. It could also be evidence of the recognition that it takes time to move major bills

through Congress, and that a revived healthcare fight, consideration of the 2018 federal budget, addressing the debt ceiling, and consideration of 2018 funding bills will all have their own political nuances and hurdles.

- The first item on the congressional agenda when Members return next week, however, will be to pass a bill to fund the government past April 28th (and ideally through the end of fiscal year 2017). President Trump has made a number of requests regarding how he would like the remainder of fiscal year 2017 funding to be allocated, but congressional leaders of both parties have indicated that such requests are unlikely to come to fruition. (<http://www.cnn.com/2017/04/17/politics/congress-government-shutdown-donald-trump/>)