



International Right of Way Association Weekly Update

Monday, May 13, 2019

Trump Administration

- The Vice President met with Senate Republicans last week to discuss infrastructure. According to those in attendance, the participants discussed the need to pay for an infrastructure package but did not discuss specific options for how to do so.
- The President's Chief of Staff is alienating congressional Republicans over what those Members of Congress perceive to be obstructionist tactics regarding government funding and infrastructure legislation.
<https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/442830-senate-gop-grows-frustrated-with-trump-chief-of-staff>
- This week is infrastructure week with numerous events around the country focused on pushing infrastructure solutions.

Congress

- Both Chambers are in session this week.
- While the next meeting between the President and congressional Democrats to discuss infrastructure pay-fors has not yet occurred, some House Democrats recommend moving a \$2 trillion infrastructure package with or without the President's support.
<https://thehill.com/homenews/house/443189-dems-eye-big-infrastructure-package-with-or-without-trump>

Analysis

- Any realistic plan for enacting comprehensive infrastructure legislation this year must include a viable, bipartisan way to pay for such funding. How to pay for an infrastructure package is the scheduled topic for discussion between the President and congressional Democrats when they reconvene later this month.
- Unfortunately, both Parties are signaling this week that a search for a bi-partisan pay-for is not the top priority. The Vice President's recent discussions with Senate Republicans emphasized that any infrastructure legislation must be fully paid for but did not address how to do so. On the other side of the Capitol, the push by certain House Democrats to move an infrastructure package with the pay-fors they like best is a political strategy that would send a dead-on-arrival infrastructure package to the Senate and does not attempt to address in a constructive way how to negotiate a bi-partisan infrastructure package.

- As we have noted previously, the first meeting between the President and congressional Democrats on infrastructure kept the hope of an infrastructure bill alive, but it did not assure its future. This is the critical time period. We will have a much better idea after the next meeting whether both sides want to have a real discussion of pay-fors or if political sniping will prevail.
- Various government officials and Members of Congress are scheduled to speak at infrastructure events this week. The tone and substance of their discussions will give us another view into the possibility of enacting comprehensive infrastructure legislation this year.