



International Right of Way Association Weekly Update

Monday, June 3, 2019

Trump Administration

- The President started his week with a trip to Europe, and his attention is on escalating trade disputes with China, Mexico, and Canada.

Congress

- Both Chambers are in session this week.
- The House will pass the \$19 billion disaster relief measure that the Senate passed prior to recess. The President is expected to sign the legislation.

Analysis

- Nossaman professionals have spent the last week speaking with policymakers on Capitol Hill and in the Administration to ascertain how various parties view the breakdown in bipartisan negotiations between the President and congressional Democrats on a comprehensive infrastructure package.
- The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee are continuing the work each started at the beginning of the year, to reauthorize the FAST Act. The funding it provides for federal surface transportation programs expires on September 30, 2020. A short-term extension of the FAST Act, let alone a long-term reauthorization bill, would require billions of dollars of additional revenue to keep the Highway Trust Fund solvent. This reality will keep debate over infrastructure funding running hot. While far less than the \$2 trillion dollar infrastructure package the President and Speaker Pelosi were discussing, Congress will still need to work hard to come to agreement on how to fund an extension or reauthorization of the FAST Act.
- When faced with the prospect of funding expiring right before an election, Congress will be motivated to find the revenues that are necessary to keep current surface transportation programs funded. (To put things in perspective, there were dozens of short-term extensions between SAFETEA-LU and MAP-21, but there was never a lapse in surface transportation program funding between those two laws.)
- At the U.S. Department of Transportation, the breakdown in negotiations over a comprehensive infrastructure package has a limited impact. The Department is

continuing to work on its FAST Act reauthorization priorities and to implement existing programs.