



International Right of Way Association Weekly Update

Monday, October 14, 2019

The White House

- The U.S. Department of Transportation (“USDOT”) announced a new rural transportation initiative known as the Rural Opportunities to Use Transportation for Economic Success, or “ROUTES.” The purpose of the initiative is to “address disparities in rural transportation infrastructure... [because] rural transportation infrastructure’s unique challenges need to be considered in order to meet our Nation’s priority transportation goals of safety and economic competitiveness.” <https://www.transportation.gov/rural>.
- President Trump pulled U.S. forces back from northern Syria. The Kurdish forces in that area agreed to let Syria's forces return in an attempt to stave off an incursion by Turkey. <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/13/world/middleeast/syria-turkey-invasion-isis.html>
- CNN and The New York Times will co-host the fourth Democratic presidential debate at Otterbein University in Westerville, Ohio at 8pm eastern on Tuesday, October 15th. The moderators will be Anderson Cooper and Erin Burnett of CNN, and by Marc Lacey of the New York Times. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-debate-factbox/factbox-six-things-to-watch-at-the-democratic-debate-in-ohio-idUSKBN1WT188>

Congress

- Both Chambers are in session this week.
- The U.S. House continues its vigorous schedule of examining witnesses and collecting subpoenaed documents as part of impeaching President Trump. <https://www.cnn.com/politics/live-news/impeachment-inquiry-10-13-2019/index.html>.
- The U.S. Senate continues its bipartisan rebuke of President Trump’s withdrawal from Syria by advancing sanctions against Turkey for its incursion into Syria. <https://www.axios.com/lindsey-graham-turkey-sancitons-syria-kurdish-07d99d6f-ec2f-47c2-8de7-831f785c56d1.html>

Analysis

- House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has pledged to move quickly through impeachment, but the volume of information subpoenaed and the resistance of respondents may slow the progress of the House Democratic majority.
- On the Senate side, even allies of President Trump are preoccupied with responding to his withdrawal of troops from Syria.
- The fourth Democratic presidential debate tomorrow night will include the return of Bernie Sanders to the campaign trail after he suffered a heart attack. Also,

philanthropist, environmental activist and impeachment advocate, Tom Steyer will debate for the first time.

- While the US DOT's new "ROUTES" initiative is a welcome development, a longer-term solution to transportation needs in the United States seems out of reach as impeachment politics have consumed the Congress and the political discourse.