



International Right of Way Association Weekly Update

Monday, October 21, 2019

The White House

- The White House Council on Environmental Quality (“CEQ”) sent to the Office of Management and Budget (“OMB”) proposed changes to the National Environmental Policy Act environmental review process for infrastructure projects. OMB will review the proposal, and then it will be published in the Federal Register for public comment. <https://news.bloombergenvironment.com/environment-and-energy/white-house-inches-closer-to-changing-infrastructure-permitting>.

Congress

- Both Chambers are in session this week.
- Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) criticized President Trump’s withdrawal of US forces from Syria. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/mitch-mcconnell-withdrawing-from-syria-is-a-grave-mistake/2019/10/18/c0a811a8-f1cd-11e9-89eb-ec56cd414732_story.html.
- Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC), co-author of a bipartisan Senate bill to sanction Turkey for its actions in Syria, has begun to soften his criticism of President Trump for withdrawing US troops from Syria. <https://www.usnews.com/news/national-news/articles/2019-10-21/lindsey-graham-now-says-he-supports-trump-on-syria-pullout>.
- The US House of Representatives will enter this fray with a bipartisan bill sponsored by the leaders of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to sanction Turkey for its incursion into Syria. <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/466349-house-foreign-affairs-leaders-introduce-turkey-sanctions-bill>.

Analysis

- Impeachment, China trade and the withdrawal of US troops from between Syria and Turkey have dominated official Washington. Congress is too busy responding to President Trump to work on much else. The prospects have increased for Congress funding the government through a continuing resolution, rather than passing new spending bills. This will put additional pressure on executive branch agencies to fund operations and grant programs as planned.