



## International Right of Way Association Weekly Update

Monday, December 2, 2019

### The White House

- Labor and trade unions and associations announced that they will hold a forum in mid-February for Presidential candidates to discuss the nation's infrastructure issues. <https://aashtojournal.org/2019/11/22/labor-trade-associations-plan-infrastructure-forum-for-presidential-candidates/>

### Congress

- Both Chambers are in session this week.
- The House Transportation and Infrastructure ("T&I") Committee's Highways and Transit Subcommittee will hold a hearing on freight transportation on Thursday. <https://transportation.house.gov/committee-activity/hearings/wheres-my-stuff-examining-the-economic-environmental-and-societal-impacts-of-freight-transportation>
- T&I Committee Republicans sent a letter to Speaker Pelosi last Tuesday pointing to the partisan pipeline safety markup as evidence of the Committee's lack of bipartisanship. The letter stipulates that a bipartisan approach is "necessary" to address surface transportation and other issues under the Committee's jurisdiction. [https://republicans-transportation.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2019-11-26\\_letter\\_to\\_pelosi\\_bipartisanship.pdf](https://republicans-transportation.house.gov/uploadedfiles/2019-11-26_letter_to_pelosi_bipartisanship.pdf)

### Analysis

- In last week's update, we speculated that the partisan T&I markup of the pipeline safety bill would have ripple effects, and T&I Republicans made it clear that it will. The likely outcome of the letter is that nothing will change—House rules and procedures give broad control to the majority party at the Committee level and on the Floor, so T&I Chairman DeFazio (D-OR) will be able to write legislation as he wishes so long as he can keep the Democrats on the Committee and in the House on board. That is not always an easy task, however, which is part of the reason why infrastructure legislation has historically been bipartisan. It is unclear what T&I Republicans want to happen, specifically, as the Committee considers legislation in the future, but the tone of the Subcommittee hearing on Thursday may be instructive as to how the Committee majority and minority are approaching surface transportation reauthorization issues.