



## International Right of Way Association Weekly Update

Monday, February 20, 2017

### Trump Administration

- Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau met with President Trump this week, pledging that Canada and the United States will collaborate “on energy infrastructure projects that will create jobs while respecting the environment” and adding that “investing in infrastructure is a great way to create the kind of economic growth that our countries so desperately need” (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/02/13/joint-statement-president-donald-j-trump-and-prime-minister-justin>; <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/02/13/remarks-president-trump-and-prime-minister-trudeau-canada-joint-press>).
- Former Oklahoma Attorney General Scott Pruitt, whose agenda includes reducing federal environmental hurdles to infrastructure development, was sworn in as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency on Friday (<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/320179-pruitt-sworn-in-as-epa-chief>).
- The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia allowed construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline to continue on Monday after two American Indian tribes challenged the January 24<sup>th</sup> Presidential Memorandum regarding the project (<http://abcnews.go.com/US/dakota-access-owner-tribes-opposing-pipeline-meet-court/story?id=45464128>).

### Congress

- The Senate Commerce Committee held a hearing on Wednesday titled “Moving America: Stakeholder Perspectives on our Multimodal Transportation System,” receiving testimony from BNSF Railway, Schneider National, Dow Chemical Company, and Amtrak (<http://www.commerce.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/hearings?ID=059064F8-8D58-4725-98BC-61CC53DBCB08>). The witnesses emphasized the need for increased infrastructure investment and streamlined federal regulations.
- The proposed “border adjustment tax” portion of Speaker Ryan’s tax reform plan, which, along with repatriation provides the basis for additional infrastructure investments, is meeting stiff resistance from Republicans in the House and Senate (<http://www.politico.com/story/2017/02/paul-ryan-tax-reform-republicans-235117>).
- Both the House and Senate are in recess this week.

### Analysis

- While the Trump Administration and Congress continue to discuss the importance of infrastructure, States are taking matters into their own hands. Despite the fact that many States and local governments have increased transportation revenue over the last five years, nearly half of the States are currently examining further infrastructure revenue increases (<http://www.aashtojournal.org/Pages/021017fueltax.aspx>), as well as infrastructure financing options (<https://www.nga.org/cms/home/news-room/news-releases/2017--news/col2-content/in-tight-fiscal-environment-stat.html>).
- While the development of the infrastructure package that ultimately moves through Congress with support of the Administration is still in its infancy, federal policy makers would do well to consider ways to incentivize non-federal infrastructure investment and leverage additional revenues being raised by States and local governments. While there is no silver-bullet solution to America's infrastructure needs, a responsible policy will recognize the importance of investment from all levels of government and the private sector.