



International Right of Way Association Weekly Update

Monday, March 6, 2017

Trump Administration

- President Trump issued an Executive Order on February 28 directing the EPA and the Corps of Engineers to revise the Waters of the U.S. (“WOTUS”) rule issued by the two agencies in 2015 (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/02/28/presidential-executive-order-restoring-rule-law-federalism-and-economic>).
- President Trump addressed a joint session of Congress on February 28, highlighting the importance of infrastructure without providing additional details about his plan (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/02/28/remarks-president-trump-joint-address-congress>).
- The Senate confirmed former Congressman Ryan Zinke as the Secretary of Interior on March 1 (https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/03/01/senate-confirms-ryan-zinke-as-interior-secretary/?utm_term=.4db07421900c). He chose a traditional means of transportation on his first trip to the office (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/02/us/politics/secretary-ryan-zinke-horse-interior.html>).
- The Senate confirmed former Texas Governor Rick Perry as the Secretary of Energy on March 2 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/02/us/politics/senate-confirms-rick-perry-as-energy-secretary.html>).

Congress

- The House of Representatives will consider a defense appropriations bill for fiscal year 2017 this week. The federal government is currently operating under a continuing resolution that expires on April 28 (<http://thehill.com/policy/defense/322015-house-to-vote-on-578b-defense-spending-bill-for-2017>).

Analysis

- The President did not add any detail to his infrastructure plan in his address to Congress: “To launch our national rebuilding, I will be asking Congress to approve legislation that produces a \$1 trillion investment in infrastructure of the United States -- financed through both public and private capital -- creating millions of new jobs. This effort will be guided by two core principles: buy American and hire American.”

- In conversations Nossaman has had with key congressional staff this week, it is evident that there is still a willingness on the Hill to wait and see what the President proposes in the fiscal year 2018 budget proposal before advancing ideas independent of the Administration.
- The House defense appropriations bill is the first effort of this Congress to address the federal government's funding needs for the remainder of fiscal year 2017. Before Congress can turn its attention to infrastructure policy, it must address funding for the remainder of fiscal year 2017, take action on the Affordable Care Act, pass a fiscal year 2018 budget, address the debt limit, and begin work on comprehensive tax reform.