



International Right of Way Association Weekly Update

Monday, January 7, 2019

Trump Administration

- Vice President Pence and Homeland Security Secretary Nielson met with senior congressional staff through the weekend to continue to make the case for the President's border security funding demand. <https://thehill.com/blogs/floor-action/scheduling/424104-this-week-shutdown-nears-record-with-no-deal-in-sight>

Congress

- Both Chambers are in session this week as government funding issues will again dominate the agenda.
- After the new Congress was seated last week, the House passed a bill to reopen the government without including the border security funding requested by the President. <https://www.cbsnews.com/live-news/new-congress-sworn-in-nancy-pelosi-house-speaker-today-2019-01-03-live-updates/>

Analysis

- It is too early to say with certainty how the shut-down will impact the possibility of enacting comprehensive infrastructure legislation this year, but the longer the shut-down lasts and the more acrimonious the relationship between the White House and the new House majority become, the harder it will be to find opportunities to work together and compromise on a package that can pass the House and be accepted by the President.
- Kellyanne Conway, counselor to the President, said on Thursday that she is hoping to be able to rely on Democrats on infrastructure policy. This statement is hardly reminiscent of the excitement to work together on infrastructure policy we heard after the election in November. Indeed, the President tweeted last month that he would not sign any bill, including infrastructure, unless his border security demands are met. <https://www.tnews.com/articles/trump-congress-eye-possibility-infrastructure-bill-2019>
- That said, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR) said last week that he plans to prepare an infrastructure proposal by the end of May. DeFazio has previously authored legislation that would raise funding for infrastructure through indexing the existing federal fuel taxes and issuing bonds on the anticipated revenues.