



International Right of Way Association Weekly Update

Monday, February 18, 2019

Government Shutdown

- Congressional negotiators reached a government funding deal last week, which passed both Chambers on Thursday and which the President signed on Friday, averting another government shutdown. All federal agencies are now funded through the end of fiscal year 2019.
- The funding deal did not contain the \$5.7 billion for border security requested by the President. In conjunction with signing the funding bill, the President declared a national emergency and direct that \$8 billion of existing federal funds be dedicated to construction of a border wall. <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/02/15/trump-national-emergency-declaration-border-wall-spending-bill.html>
- The State of California has announced that it will challenge the legality of the emergency declaration. <https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/430454-several-states-to-join-california-lawsuit-against-trumps-national>

Congress

- Transportation programs fared well overall in the funding bill:
 - Nearly \$50 billion for the Federal-aid Highway Program
 - \$900 million for BUILD (formerly TIGER) grants
 - \$2.55 billion for transit capital investment grants
 - \$10.64 billion in transit formula funds
 - \$655 million for federal rail investment grants
- Both Chambers are in recess this week.

Analysis

- Now that the government funding issue is in the rear-view for the time being, it will be important to watch how Congress and the White House interact on other issues. The House is beginning to ramp up its oversight over the Administration, which has already rankled the President publicly in the State of the Union address.
- The House and Senate transportation committees are also beginning to work in earnest on putting together infrastructure legislation, however, which is one of the President's

priorities and which he also highlighted in the State of the Union address as a key area where the White House and Congress can work together.