2018 Recap and 2019 Look-ahead: Infrastructure

Overview of congressional and administrative actions around infrastructure with potential agenda items for next year

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Producer
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Major congressional actions in 2018 on infrastructure

**Background**
- Bipartisan legislation that reauthorizes the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Marine Debris Program through 2022
- Allows the administrator of NOAA to declare “severe marine debris events” that opens up federal funding for cleanup
- Directs NOAA to study marine debris and ways to mitigate debris, including developing alternatives to plastic

**Status:** Passed House on 6/6/18

**Save Our Seas Act**

**Background**
- Bipartisan legislation to renew the Federal Aviation Administration’s funding for another five years
- Establishes new conditions for recreational use of drones and repeals the Special Rule for Model Aircraft
- Provides for repairs to infrastructure damaged in natural disaster, and directs how disaster program funds are spent

**Status:** Signed into law on 10/15/18

**FAA reauthorization**

**Background**
- Bipartisan legislation to authorize funding for water infrastructure programs as well as funding for new projects
- Authorizes $4.4 billion for EPA’s safe drinking water initiatives
- Authorizes $6.1 billion for US Army Corps harbor, port, and waterway projects
- Funds must still be appropriated by Congress

**Status:** Signed into law on 10/23/18

**America’s Water Infrastructure Act**

Sources: National Journal research.

Daniel Stublen | Slide last updated on: December 20, 2018
Trump administration 2018 recap: infrastructure

$1.5 trillion dollar plan stalled
- Trump’s plan relies primarily on “public-private partnerships”
- The federal government would spend only $200 billion to entice states, localities, and private investors to match
- No legislative text was introduced

Infrastructure point-person leaves the White House
- DJ Gribbin, White House special assistant for infrastructure resigned in April
- He came to the Trump administration from Macquarie Capital where he worked primarily on public-private partnership projects

Executive orders on trade
- Some analyses have showed increased costs for projects due to import tariffs on steel and aluminum
- A proposed expansion of “Buy American” rules that would require federal infrastructure projects to use only American products was reported in August but never formally announced

Sources: National Journal research.
Democrats win back chairmanships of key House committees, while Republicans maintain control of the Senate

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<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Ranking member</th>
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<td>Senate Environment &amp; Public Works</td>
<td>John Barrasso (R-WY)</td>
<td>Tom Carper (D-DE)</td>
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<td>Senate Commerce, Science &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>John Thune (R-SD)</td>
<td>Maria Cantwell (D-WA)</td>
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<td>Senate Banking, Housing &amp; Urban Affairs</td>
<td>Mike Crapo (R-ID)</td>
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<td>House Energy &amp; Commerce</td>
<td>Frank Pallone (D-NJ)</td>
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<td>House Transportation &amp; Infrastructure</td>
<td>Peter DeFazio (D-OR)</td>
<td>Sam Graves (R-MO)</td>
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Potential 2019 infrastructure agenda items for Congress

Major infrastructure funding package

**Background**
- Democrats in the House want much more federal money than proposed by Pres. Trump in 2018
- There is bipartisan support in Congress for increased spending on infrastructure projects
- Democrats have proposed increasing the gas tax to raise money for the Highway Trust Fund
- Federal highway programs need to be re-authorized before 2020

**Potential legislation:** H.R. 1664, “Investing in America: A Penny for Progress Act”
- Sponsored by incoming House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR)
- Raises $500 billion for infrastructure projects through annual increases to the gas tax and new Treasury bonds

Increased oversight of the Trump administration

**Background**
- Incoming House Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR) plans to quickly call on Dept. of Transportation officials to testify on their slow approvals of transit grants

Sources: National Journal research.
Potential 2019 infrastructure agenda items for the Trump administration

**Continued deregulation of federal permitting**
- President Trump’s has made cutting red-tape a priority and has reversed several major initiatives by the Obama administration.
- In August 2017, Trump signed the “One Federal Decision” executive order which designates a single agency as the lead decision-maker.

**Final WOTUS rule**
- The Clean Water Act requires stricter protections of “Waters of the United States,” but defining that term has been controversial.
- A proposed WOTUS definition was released on December 11, 2018 by the EPA and US Army Corps to replace a controversial Obama-era 2015 rule.

**Climate change pivoting**
- Democrats, especially new progressive members, have demanded that for any infrastructure package to pass, it must address climate change.
- President Trump has frequently denied belief in man-made climate change and rolled back Obama-era climate protections.
- The administration may have to accept the creation of new renewable energy programs for any bill to pass the House.

“The Democrats will come to us with a plan for infrastructure, a plan for health care, a plan for whatever they’re looking at and we’ll negotiate … We have a lot of things in common on infrastructure.”

— President Trump

Sources: National Journal research.