May 20, 2020

Today, we bring to you an exclusive Q&A with U.S. Representative Josh Gottheimer (D-N.J.), Co-Chair of the Problem Solvers Caucus. Representative Gottheimer shares his thoughts on what he and his colleagues are doing to solve the COVID-19 crisis and set the stage for the revival of the U.S. economy when it is over.

Please take a moment to read the letter that 2020 AEM Board Chair Jeff Reed and 2020 CE Sector Board Chair Rod Schrader sent to U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao today highlighting our industry’s efforts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the urgent need for a significant investment in infrastructure, and the results from our recent CEO survey.

Don’t forget to register for tomorrow’s Transportation Construction Coalition (TCC) virtual briefing with the Chairs and Ranking Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works and the House Committee on Infrastructure and Transportation. Keep scrolling for more details and information on how to sign-up below.

Are you looking to secure personal protective equipment (PPE), sanitization supplies, or display graphics to promote and protect safety in the workplace? AEM and the Marek Group are working together to provide these items to you. Read more about the partnership and how to purchase the items.

Here are some of the day’s other developments:


Congressman Josh Gottheimer represents New Jersey's Fifth Congressional District in the northern part of the state, which includes parts of Bergen, Passaic, Sussex, and Warren counties. In Congress, Gottheimer serves on the House Financial Services Committee where he works on three Subcommittees: National Security, Capital Markets, and Diversity and Inclusion. Gottheimer serves as Co-Chair of the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus, where he works across party lines to find areas of agreement on key issues.
Today, Rep. Gottheimer is sharing an update on what he and his colleagues in the Problem Solvers Caucus are doing to help the country recover from the public health crisis and address our economic challenges.

Q) In regards to COVID-19, are there any specific legislative measures or provisions you’d like to highlight?

The bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus, a group of 25 Democrats and 25 Republicans that I Co-Chair with Rep. Tom Reed, recently unveiled a comprehensive proposal focused on how to best reopen the economy safely. Our Reopening and Recovery “Back to Work” Checklist puts a top priority on mass testing, even for people not showing symptoms, to ensure that when the economy reopens, people carrying the virus can be identified quickly and not endanger others by heading back to work. We delivered our checklist to Congressional leadership and the White House as options for immediate consideration in the next phases of coronavirus response.

Q) How is responding to COVID-19 an opportunity for bipartisanship?

After crises, like after 9/11 or a natural disaster, we see the country come together. Unfortunately, that’s what it often takes — a tragedy. We know the best way to beat this virus and get our economy back on track is to work together. That’s why the Problem Solvers Caucus is continuing to meet several times a week virtually throughout this crisis to discuss bipartisan solutions to problems posed by this pandemic.

Q) From a legislation standpoint, what have you done for your community, or our nation as whole, to respond to the COVID-19 crisis?

Our government and the private sector must learn from this public health and economic crisis, assess the gaps, and better prepare for future national emergencies. We simply cannot rely on the rest of the world to build our ventilators, manufacture our medicine, and supply our masks and gowns. That’s why I recently helped introduce the bipartisan Made in America Emergency Preparedness Act, to establish a federal Commission to help ensure our nation’s government and industries are better prepared for the next crisis. This Commission would be modeled on the 9/11 Commission and would look at the national emergency response by the United States government and private sector to the current COVID-19 pandemic. The Commission would then report findings to Congress and the President on what steps and items are necessary to ensure America’s effective response to future national emergencies.

AEM Board Leaders Highlight Industry Efforts in Letter to DOT Secretary Chao

Today, 2020 AEM Board Chair Jeff Reed and 2020 CE Sector Board Chair Rod Schrader sent a letter to U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao. The letter highlights the current needs of the equipment manufacturing industry and shares details from our recent CEO survey. It also lists AEM’s recent efforts to advocate for infrastructure investment, including our ongoing support for legislation to provide $50 billion to state departments of transportation to fill revenue gaps caused by the ongoing pandemic, as well as our efforts to pass a fully funded, long-term surface transportation bill.

AEM Asks for Clarity on Paycheck Protection Program Concerns
AEM continues to stay engaged on the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). Yesterday, as a leader of the Highway Materials Group, AEM sent a letter to House and Senate leadership urging Congress to provide clarity on certain issues that have developed on necessity and tax deductibility as they relate to the PPP. Specifically, the members of the Highway Materials Group are concerned that certain entities that sought the loans in good faith may be penalized down the line as a result of a lack of clarity on how necessity for the loan is determined. Additionally, there is concern that businesses that accept a PPP loan will no longer be eligible for certain tax deductions. The letter expresses support for language in Section 20235 of the HEROES Act, which resolves the issue. However, as that legislation unlikely to move forward in its current form, Congress needs to take certain steps to ensure that similar language is put into law.

REMINDER: Transportation Construction Coalition Virtual Washington Briefing
Tomorrow, the Transportation Construction Coalition will host a virtual briefing to address the status of current pandemic relief and recovery efforts and infrastructure legislation in Congress, as well as the status of reauthorization of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, which expires Sept. 30.

The briefing is being held in lieu of the annual fly-in, which was cancelled as a result of the ongoing pandemic, will feature Chairman John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), Senate Environment & Public Works Committee (confirmed); Ranking Member Tom Carper (D-Del.), Senate Environment & Public Works Committee (confirmed); Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.), House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee (confirmed); and Ranking Member Sam Graves (R-Mo.), House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee (invited). For those interested in participating, please use this registration link.

For more information, please contact Kate Fox Wood, Senior Director, Government Relations, at kfoxwood@aem.org.

ICYMI: AEM Connecting Manufacturers with Safety Supplies as Businesses Plan to Return to Work
Last week, AEM announced it was teaming up with The Marek Group to provide a hub for businesses to find COVID-19 supplies, including personal protective equipment (PPE), sanitizing supplies, and display graphics to promote and protect safety in the workplace. AEM’s online store, will provide everything from signage, to floor graphics, to face shields and masks, to hand sanitizer for orders of any size. People needing to place larger or recurring orders should call (262) 549-8931. AEM members and customers can get a ten percent discount by entering promo code "AEM" in the discount code box during checkout.

State Activities
AEM has been monitoring activities taken by Governors as they continue to issue closure and reopening orders. We are in close contact with their staff to make the case that our industry is establishing health and safety protocols to protect both employees and customers.
Notable for today’s update is that the Governor of Hawaii announced a phased plan towards lifting the state’s closure order. The Governor of Texas announced the resumption of limited operations for certain businesses in the coming days. The Governors of Arizona, Colorado, Ohio, New Mexico, and Washington published important guidance and information for businesses.

Now that state governments are transitioning into re-opening strategies, we are providing a new U.S. map showing when state shelter-in-place orders and stay-at-home advisories expire.

For all of the latest information, please visit our dedicated state by state tracker.

**Canada Activities**

Minister of Finance Bill Morneau and Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry Navdeep Bains have announced the opening of the application process for the government’s Large Employer Emergency Financing Facility (LEEFF). Additional information on the application process is available on the Canada Development Investment Corporation (CDEV) website.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced an expansion to the eligibility criteria for the Canada Emergency Business Account (CEBA) to include many owner-operated small businesses. More details, including the launch date for applications under the new criteria, will follow in the days to come.
The Prime Minister has also announced that under an agreement with the U.S. administration, the border will remain closed for another 30 days.

Today’s highlights from the provinces include:

- **Manitoba**: As of May 17, the province has extended the provincewide state of emergency as of for a period of 30 days.
- **Ontario**: The province has announced it has extended all emergency orders currently in force until May 29, 2020. It has also announced that schools will remain closed for the rest of the semester.
- **Quebec**: The province has announced that retailers with street access can open as of May 25, and daycares will be allowed to open as of June 1 in the Greater Montreal area.
- **Saskatchewan**: The province has announced the Re-Open Saskatchewan plan moved into Phase 2, allowing for retail stores to open for business.

We continue to update our resources on Canadian activities on AEM’s COVID-19 resources page. You can also click here for the latest updates from Ottawa and all the provinces.

Do you have questions or need to get a hold of AEM’s Advocacy Team? E-mail our Response Team at responseteam@aem.org with any questions or feedback.

As always, if you have any questions about AEM’s ongoing efforts, need assistance with a specific issue, or would like to share how the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic is impacting your business, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at keideberg@aem.org.

Best,
-Kip

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