May 29, 2020

Lawmakers followed up on the official kick-off to summer with a very busy week. The President welcomed New York Governor Andrew Cuomo and dealt with non-COVID-19 related issues, while Capitol Hill was bustling on the relief front.

Yesterday, the U.S. House of Representatives approved H.R. 7010, the Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act of 2020, in an overwhelmingly bipartisan vote of 417-1. The legislation makes corrections and addresses concerns lawmakers, business owners, and other stakeholders had of the first iteration of the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). The bill now heads to the U.S. Senate, and we are urging our friends in the Upper Chamber to swiftly consider the legislation.

We are keeping our eyes peeled for the debut of the Main Street Lending Program, after the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston released a number of documents relating to the program this week. AEM staff is joining a call with the senior officials from the Federal Reserve this afternoon to discuss the details of the program, and we will share information with you as it becomes available.

As states and localities continue their phased reopening plans, we share with you a new update from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) that provides social distancing guidelines for the workplace to protect employees from the coronavirus.

Here are some of the day’s other developments:

**House Approves Paycheck Protection Program Fix**

On Thursday, the House passed H.R. 7010, the Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act of 2020 nearly unanimously (417-1), with lone opposition coming from U.S. Representative Massie (R-Ky.). The legislation was sponsored by Reps. Dean Phillips (D-Minn.) and Chip Roy (R-Texas) and the text is very similar to and shares an identical title with another bill also sponsored by Rep. Roy, H.R. 6886. H.R. 7010, provides a number of changes to the Paycheck Protection Program that employers have been pushing for including extending the timeline for businesses to spend the loans to 24 weeks from eight. The legislation also lowers the minimum amount that must be spent on payroll from 75 percent to 60 percent. An earlier version of the bill had eliminated the minimum payroll spending amount entirely but concerns that this would
encourage businesses not to hire back workers prompted the change to 60 percent instead. The bill now heads to the Senate where it is still unclear if a vote will be held.

**Main Street Lending Program Expected to Debut Next Week**

On Thursday afternoon, the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston released a number of documents relating to the Main Street Lending Program, signaling that the loan program could debut as soon as next week. The program allows the Fed to purchase up to $600 billion of participating loans until September 30. The program is made up of three facilities (the Main Street New Loan Facility (MSNLF), the Main Street Priority Loan Facility (MSPLF), and the Main Street Expanded Loan Facility (MSELF)) and will provide a one-year principal and interest deferred loan to small- and medium-sized businesses with up to 15,000 employees or 2019 revenues up to $5 billion with a four-year maturity. The MSNLF and MSPLF allow for the origination of new loans of $500,000 - $25,000,000, while the MSELF allows businesses to increase the size of existing loans with a minimum loan of $10,000,000 up to $200,000,000. The program allows the Fed to purchase up to $600 billion of participating loans until September 30.

We will continue to keep an eye out for this program’s debut and share details with you as soon as they become available.

**OSHA Alert on Social Distancing in the Workplace**

The Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has issued steps employers can follow to implement social distancing in the workplace and to help protect workers from exposure to the coronavirus.

Safety measures employers can implement include:

- Isolate any worker who begins to exhibit symptoms until they can either go home or leave to seek medical care;
- Establish flexible worksites (e.g., telecommuting) and flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts), if feasible;
- Stagger breaks and re-arrange seating in common break areas to maintain physical distance between workers;
- In workplaces where customers are present, mark six-foot distances with floor tape in areas where lines form, use drive-through windows or curbside pickup, and limit the number of customers allowed at one time;
- Move or reposition workstations to create more distance, and install plexiglass partitions; and
- Encourage workers to bring any safety and health concerns to the employer’s attention.

The new alert is available for download in English and Spanish.

**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 Governors of Alabama, Alaska, Delaware, Maine, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, and New Mexico announced the resumption of limited operations for certain businesses in the coming days. The Governors of Georgia, Idaho, and Massachusetts 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**

Today, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced new funding to provide support to Indigenous families and communities during this crisis.

The New Democratic Party have supported the governing Liberal’s Government Motion No. 7, which outlines the functioning of the House of Commons from now until the Summer. It was adopted despite opposition from the Conservative Party and the Bloc Quebecois.

Today’s highlights from the provinces include:
• **British Columbia**: The province has [extended its state of emergency](#) for an additional two weeks.
• **New Brunswick**: The province has [extended its state of emergency](#) for an additional two weeks.
• **Nova Scotia**: The province has announced that most businesses which had been required to close will be allowed to reopen as of June 5.
• **Saskatchewan**: The province has [extended its state of emergency](#) for an additional two weeks.

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](mailto: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](mailto:keideberg@aem.org).

Best,
-Kip

Kip Eideberg
Senior Vice President, Government & Industry Relations
Association of Equipment Manufacturers