June 1, 2020

The U.S. Senate is back in Washington, D.C. after last week’s vote by the U.S. House of Representatives on a series of fixes to the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). The House bill extended the timeline for businesses to spend the loans from eight to 24 weeks. It also lowered the minimum amount that must be spent on payroll from 75% to 60%.

There are rumblings that the Senate may not take up the House bill, raising questions to how they will address issues with the PPP. Agri-Pulse reported this morning, “Senate Small Business Committee Chairman Marco Rubio, R-Fla., has also expressed concern about the 60% minimum and said the House bill could ‘create new and serious burdens for PPP borrowers in terms of forgiveness…I will continue to work with the administration and my colleagues to ensure necessary changes to increase flexibility do not inadvertently harm business owners and employees in the process.’”

CHECK YOUR INBOX: Last week, we deployed the second round of our CEO survey to help us understand how the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our member companies, identify the challenges facing executives, and get a better sense of the outlook for the next three to six months. We will share the results of the survey once its completed, and will provide you with ongoing updates on how we leverage the information in support of our ongoing advocacy efforts. If you have not completed the survey, we ask that you do so by THIS FRIDAY at 5 p.m. Click here to complete the survey.

Please don’t hesitate to email me if you have any questions.

Here are some of the day’s other developments:

Forget “Infrastructure Week”: Welcome “Infrastructure Summer”
All signs indicate that both the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives plan to take meaningful action on infrastructure this summer, which is good news for the equipment manufacturing industry and its sector partners.

Specifically, as the Senate continues to focus on nominations, committees are continuing their work on other important issues, such as reauthorization of the federal surface transportation program and addressing critical infrastructure challenges that have arisen due to the coronavirus pandemic. Senate Roger Wicker (R-Miss.), chairman of the Senate Commerce
Committee, will hold a hearing on critical infrastructure challenges on Wednesday. AEM sent a letter to Senator Wicker two weeks ago outlining several priorities that his committee could address.

On Thursday, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee will host a hearing on leveraging infrastructure investment in the road to recovery from the pandemic. AEM will submit a statement articulating the industry’s infrastructure priorities and the benefits to the equipment manufacturing industry that come through federal investment.

The House is reported to be readying for the release of its surface transportation reauthorization bill, and expects to mark the bill up in the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee this month. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) also indicated that he would be prioritizing time on the House floor for a vote on an infrastructure bill that would include surface transportation infrastructure and water infrastructure.

So, while the joke about “Infrastructure Week” is still fresh, and even stings a little bit for those of us who are true advocates, it appears that infrastructure is actually going to be the focus in Congress for the summer. AEM staff will be providing more updates soon and continue to ensure that the industry’s voice is heard when it comes to investing in U.S. roads, highways, bridges, utilities, broadband infrastructure, ports, airports, etc.

ICYMI: Positive, Objective Approach to COVID-19 Pays Dividends for Elliot Equipment Company
AEM’s Industry Advisor has been profiling AEM member companies as they navigate the uncharted waters of the COVID-19 pandemic. This week, we read about Omaha-based Elliott Equipment Company. President and CEO Jim Glazer shares with AEM how effective communication and an optimistic approach have made a positive impact on the company, its processes, and its employees. “The way we see it, there are challenges and opportunities, not problems. And looking at (the pandemic) that approach has served us well,” said Glazer. Read the profile here.

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 Louisiana, New York, Rhode Island, and Washington have announced the resumption of limited operations for certain businesses in the coming days. The Governor of New Hampshire announced an extension of his modified stay at home order. The Governors of Ohio 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 that funding delivered through the federal Gas Tax Fund will be accelerated this year. The $2.2 billion in annual federal infrastructure funding for communities will be delivered in one payment in June.

Today’s highlights from the provinces include:
- **Manitoba**: The province has extended some of its measures in place to help residents and businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Nova Scotia**: The province has announced a new gathering limit of 10 and more steps toward reopening the province.
- **Ontario**: The province has announced it has enacted a new regulatory amendment that will put non-unionized employees on Infectious Disease Emergency Leave any time their hours of work are temporarily reduced by their employer due to COVID-19.
- **Quebec**: The province is extending the duration of a support measure for businesses and by modifying certain tax deadlines stipulated in the Quebec taxation system.

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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