June 3, 2020

After a slow start, activity has picked up on Capitol Hill this week, especially on the infrastructure front.

The U.S. Senate held a hearing today focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on infrastructure, bringing in leaders from top infrastructure stakeholders to discuss the current state of the industry. Over in the U.S. House, Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (T&I) Democrats introduced the INVEST Act, which serves as the surface transportation reauthorization, and is set to expire Sept. 30. As currently outlined, the bill faces a tough road ahead as Committee Democrats did not include any input from Committee Republicans. AEM’s Advocacy Team is communicating with both sides of Capitol Hill on infrastructure policies that will benefit equipment manufacturers, and we will continue to bring you the latest on these policies.

We have yet to see any movement the House-passed Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) fix bill. Senate Republicans are debating whether to pass the House bill, or to make some changes of their own. CNN reported that a number of Senate Republicans discussed their grievances during yesterday’s weekly Senate GOP lunch, including U.S. Senator Ron Johnson (R-Wis.), who told CNN "I have concerns. There is no rush right now, and we really ought to consider if there is a better way of doing these things."

Here are some of the day’s other developments:

ICYMI: We Want to Hear from You – CEO Survey
Last week, we deployed the second round of our CEO survey to help us better understand how the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact member companies, identify the challenges facing executives, and understand the outlook for the next three to six months. We will share the results of the survey shortly after 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.

Transportation Tango: House and Senate Focus on Infrastructure
Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, AEM has continued to advocate for investment in U.S. infrastructure to help drive the economic comeback. We are pleased to see both chambers
focus on infrastructure this week. Today at 2:30 p.m. ET, the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation held a hearing on "The State of Transportation and Critical Infrastructure: Examining the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic" with testimony from Randy Guillot, Chairman of the Board of the American Trucking Associations; John Bozzella, President and CEO of the Alliance for Automotive Innovation; Larry Willis, President of the Transportation Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO); Ian Jefferies, President and CEO of the Association of American Railroads; and Alex Oehler, Interim president and CEO of the Interstate Natural Gas Association of America.

On Tuesday, the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Democrats released the proposed surface transportation reauthorization, the “Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation in America Act” or the “INVEST in America Act.” The $494 billion, 5-year bill provides $319 billion for the federal aid highway program under the Federal Highway Administration, $105 billion for transit programs under the Federal Transit Administration, $4.6 billion for highway safety programs under the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, $5.3 billion for motor carrier safety programs under the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, and $60 billion for rail programs. In order to help states and localities better deal with the impact of COVID-19, the legislation provides a 100-percent federal share for highway, transit, and safety funds for fiscal year 2021.

The proposed bill would prioritize fixing existing roads and bridges before building new capacity, create a “Task Force on Developing a 21st Century Surface Transportation Workforce” to provide recommendations on current and future workforce needs, provide funding to expand Vehicle Miles Traveled Pilot program, and establish a $250 million grant program to support infrastructure investment in rural communities. At the moment, the legislation has a difficult path forward as the creation of the legislation did not include input from Committee Republicans, the bill has a focus on green initiatives that are not palatable to the minority, and the House Ways and Means Committee has yet to address a pay-for. If you would like to see more information about the INVEST in America Act, the Committee majority has released a 10-page summary, a fact sheet, and a section-by-section.

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 Maine, Michigan, and New York announced the resumption of limited operations for certain businesses in the coming days. The Governors of Delaware and Louisiana announced the timing of later phases in their reopening plans.

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.
Canada Activities
On June 3, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the appointment of Karen Hogan as Canada’s new Auditor General. This appointment is effective June 8. Given the Auditor General’s responsibilities, which include auditing operations of the federal and territorial governments, Hogan is expected to play a vital role in making sure large amounts of federal funds used on COVID assistance programs are properly utilized.

Today’s highlights from the provinces include:

- **Manitoba**: The province has announced it is **investing $33 million, an additional 10 percent top up, in damage prevention and climate resiliency projects** to support municipalities across the province.
- **Ontario**: The province has announced it is **investing $150 million in reliable broadband and cellular service** in rural, remote, and underserved areas of the province. The province also extended its Declaration of Emergency until June 30.
- **Saskatchewan**: The province has announced it is **investing $28 million to improve rural roads in Saskatchewan Rural Municipalities** (RMs).

We continue to update our resources on Canadian activities on [AEM’s COVID-19 resources page](https://aem.org/covid-19). You can also click here for the latest updates from [Ottawa and all the provinces](https://aem.org/covid-19).
Do you have questions or need to get a hold of AEM’s Advocacy Team? E-mail our Response Team at respondsteam@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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