June 12, 2020

Last night, the U.S. Senate burned the midnight oil and voted to move forward with consideration of S. 3422, the Great American Outdoors (GAO) Act. This comes after an AEM letter sent last week supporting the bill and highlighting the benefits for our industry. As we previously reported on Monday, the bill will improve infrastructure within national parks by providing $9.5 billion over five years to help address a more than $20 billion maintenance backlog. Final passage is expected sometime next week.

Thank you to all who have completed our follow-up survey. As you know, the purpose of the survey is to learn how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted your organization, and how you think it will shape the next three to six months. **We are closing the survey TONIGHT. Click here to complete the survey and share your thoughts before 5 p.m. CT.**

Here are some of today’s other developments:

**The Week Ahead on Capitol Hill**

Looking forward to next week, there are a number of important hearings and markups to highlight pertaining to key issue for equipment manufacturers and our industry as a whole.

On Wednesday, United States Trade Representative, Robert Lighthizer will be testifying before both the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee in a virtual format at 10 a.m. and in person before the U.S. Senate Finance Committee at 3:00 p.m. on the Trump administration’s 2020 trade agenda. AEM will be submitting comments for the record for both hearings. Look for those in a future update.

We also expect to see a markup of the “**Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation in America Act**” or the “**INVEST in America Act.**” The $494 billion, five-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.
This bill was crafted in a partisan fashion and will likely pass through the committee along party lines. We also anticipate Republicans on the committee to introduce their own bill as an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

**USDA Announces $545 Million in Coronavirus Food Assistance Program Payments**
U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue recently announced the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) has already approved more than $545 million in payments to producers who have applied for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP). CFAP provides vital financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered a price decline of five percent or more or who had losses due to market supply chain disruptions due to COVID-19 and face additional market costs. The program began taking applications May 26, and the agency has so far received over 86,000 applications. [Read more about CFAP](#).

**Closing TONIGHT: Complete our CEO Survey**
We recently 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 are closing the survey tonight at 5 p.m. CT and would love to hear from anyone who believes they have been impacted, positively or negatively, by the pandemic. [Click here to complete the survey](#). Please don’t hesitate to [email me](#) if you have any questions.

**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 Indiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York and Virginia announced the resumption of limited operations for certain businesses in the coming days. The Governor of Oregon announced a one-week pause on any counties transitioning to the new phase of her reopening plan. The Governor of Georgia has published important guidance 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

On June 10, the Government introduced Bill C-17, An Act respecting additional COVID-19 measures, which aimed to implement a range of recently announced COVID-19 response measures, including: broadening the eligibility criteria for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), implementing supports for Canadians with disabilities, implementing penalties for those who fraudulently collect the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), and others. The Government was unable to reach an agreement with Opposition parties and, despite last-minute negotiations, the legislation was tabled until next week as discussions continue between the parties.

Today’s updates from the provinces include:

- **British Columbia**: The province has announced further support for the forestry sector.
- **Manitoba**: The province has announced it is seeking public input on the draft plan for Phase Three of reopening the Manitoba economy.
- **Ontario**: The province has announced that people are being encouraged to establish a social "circle" of no more than 10 people who can interact and come into close contact with one another without physical distancing.
- **Saskatchewan**: The province has announced it is preparing for Phase 4 of the Re-Open Saskatchewan plan and that a target date for the first part of Phase 4 will be announced early next week.
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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