July 1, 2020

PROGRAMMING NOTE: In observance of Independence Day, there will not be an update on July 3. The updates will resume next week.

It seems fitting that our neighbors to the north are celebrating Canada Day on the long-awaited United States-Mexico-Canada-Agreement (USMCA) enforcement day. Cheers to that!

Another bit of good news: Last night, the Senate approved legislation to extend the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) application period to Aug. 8, giving more small business owners the opportunity to connect with a lender partner and apply for the loan. We’ll keep you updated as this legislation moves to the House.

As the U.S. Senate continues consideration of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the U.S. House of Representatives is currently moving towards a final vote on H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act. While AEM supports H.R. 2’s passage, we continue to encourage lawmakers to work on bipartisan legislation so that Congress can quickly allocate those much-needed infrastructure dollars to critical projects across the country.

Here are some of today’s other news and developments:

**USMCA: Today’s the Day**
Today, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) goes into force, after more than three years of diplomatic negotiations. In a press release issued this morning, AEM’s Dennis Slater recognized the new trade agreement. “This marks the start of a new chapter for North American trade. USMCA expands agricultural market access, establishes rules for e-commerce, strengthens labor and environmental protections, and updates customs rules that will cut red tape and make it easier for U.S. manufacturers to sell to their Canadian and Mexican customers,” said Slater. Read the full statement.

**House Momentum on Infrastructure Bill Continues**
At the time this update was written, the U.S. House of Representatives was still considering H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act, with a final vote expected in the late afternoon. AEM joined the Transportation Construction Coalition in sending a letter in support of passage of H.R. 2.

Highlights from H.R. 2 include:
• $494 billion for U.S. surface transportation infrastructure (including $319 for the federal-aid highway program);
• $22.5 billion for airport and airway infrastructure;
• $10 billion for U.S. Army Corp of Engineers projects including ports and harbors;
• $80 billion for broadband infrastructure

Several amendments supported by AEM have already been agreed to during House floor debate, including one authored by Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) called the BUILD Act, which would raise the federal cap on private activity bonds for surface transportation and freight improvement projects.

AEM staff will continue to provides updates as the process for surface transportation program reauthorization progresses, and Congress continues to consider additional infrastructure legislation.

**Paycheck Protection Program Extended**
Late last night, the U.S. Senate voted to extend the Paycheck Protection Program until Aug. 8. While prospects remain uncertain in the House, $130 billion in authorized funds for the program remain on the table. Reports hold that the legislation would earmark $25 billion specifically for businesses with fewer than 10 employees, and restrict the amount available to individual hotel or restaurant chain loans to $2 million.

**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 Arizona, Colorado, and Delaware announced the closure of certain businesses. The Governors of Alabama and Georgia announced extensions of their current reopening phases. The Governors of Massachusetts, Kansas, and Oregon 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
Happy Canada Day! In observance of the holiday, we will have a new update 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

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