

Senate to Approve Chao Nomination This Week; Democrats Offer Their Own Infrastructure Proposal as Trump's Proposal Still Unclear; Transportation Committees Begin to Hold Hearings on Infrastructure

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Legislative Activity

Senate to Approve Chao Nomination This Week

On Tuesday, the **Senate** will vote on the Honorable *Elaine Chao*'s nominations to serve as Transportation Secretary. Secretary-designate Chao is expected to face little opposition in the Senate and should be confirmed easily. For additional information on Ms. Chao and her nomination hearing in the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, please see our previous postings.

Democrats Offer Their Own Infrastructure Proposal as Trump's Proposal Still Unclear

Senate Democrats released their own \$1 trillion infrastructure proposal last week, as details about President Trump's proposal remain unclear. While President Trump emphasized a large infrastructure package during the campaign, Congressional Republicans have not made the proposal a priority as they focus on Affordable Care Act repeal and tax reform. The Senate Democratic proposal has little chance of becoming law, but it will be an important messaging document as negotiations over an infrastructure proposal progress throughout the year.

Senate Democrats say their plan, "A Blueprint to Rebuild America's Infrastructure," would invest \$1 trillion in infrastructure projects over ten years and create 15 million new jobs. The plan calls for spending \$210 billion on roads and bridges; \$110 billion on water and sewer systems; \$180 billion on rail and bus systems; \$200 billion for a Vital Infrastructure Program (VIP); \$65 billion for ports, airports, and waterways; \$100 billion on energy infrastructure; and \$10 billion for new innovative financing tools such as an infrastructure bank. Notably, the plan does not address how such ambitious spending would be paid for beyond stating that the plan would be fiscally responsible by closing unnamed tax loopholes to offset associated costs.

It has become increasingly clear that Congress will not act on a broad infrastructure proposal in the first 100 days of the new administration. Recently, House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) said the size of any infrastructure proposal is currently unknown, as Congress will have to make room for it during the

upcoming budget process. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) recently said that an infrastructure proposal could be paired with tax reform, as a way to pay for the proposal.

Transportation Committees Begin to Hold Hearings on Infrastructure

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will hold a hearing on Wednesday, February 1, titled “Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America.” The hearing will feature witnesses that lead FedEx Corporation, Cargill Incorporated, BMW North America, Vermeer Corporation, and the AFL-CIO. A memorandum from Committee staff to Members regarding the substance of the hearing is available [here](#).

The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee is expected to hold a hearing on America’s infrastructure next week, reportedly on Wednesday, February 8.

This Week’s Hearings:

- On Wednesday, February 1, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has scheduled a hearing titled “Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America.” The witnesses will be:
 - Frederick W. Smith, Chairman, President, and Chief Executive Officer, FedEx Corporation;
 - David W. MacLennan, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Cargill, Incorporated;
 - Ludwig Willisch, President and Chief Executive Officer, BMW North America;
 - Mary V. Andringa, Chair of the Board, Vermeer Corporation; and
 - Richard L. Trumka, President, AFL-CIO.
- On Wednesday, February 1, the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee has scheduled a hearing titled “A Growth Agenda: Reducing Unnecessary Regulatory Burdens.” The witnesses will be:
 - Jack N. Gerard, President and CEO, American Petroleum Institute;
 - Gary Shapiro, President and CEO, Consumer Technology Association;
 - Rosario Palmieri, Vice President of Labor, Legal, and Regulatory Policy, National Association of Manufacturers;
 - Adam J. White, Research Fellow, Hoover Institution; and
 - Professor Lisa Heinzerling, William J. Brennan, Jr. Professor of Law, Georgetown University Law Center.
- On Wednesday, February 1, the House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Energy has scheduled a hearing titled “The Electricity Sector’s Efforts to Respond to Cybersecurity

Threats.” The witnesses will be announced.

- On Wednesday, February 1, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee has scheduled a hearing titled “Fencing Along the Southwest Border.” The witnesses will be:
 - David Aguilar, Former Acting Commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Department of Homeland Security;
 - Ronald Colburn, Former Deputy Chief of the U.S. Border Patrol, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; and
 - Seth Stodder, Former Assistant Secretary for Border, Immigration, and Trade Policy, U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

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