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Subject: Weekly Update

David Turch and Associates

WASHINGTON UPDATE

OCTOBER 16, 2015

HOUSE TRANSPORTATION MARKUP SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 22

Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Bill Shuster (R-PA) finally scheduled a much anticipated markup of a long-term transportation reauthorization bill for October 22. Federal transportation programs including the Highway Trust Fund expire on October 29, leaving Congress with precious few legislative days to enact a long-term authorization measure or another short-term extension. Senator Barbara Boxer (D-CA) has been pressing Chairman Shuster to move with greater speed in adopting a House bill so that a House/Senate conference committee can get to work reconciling the two respective measures. Earlier today, Shuster unveiled draft legislation, the Surface Transportation Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2015, that will be used as the underlining text for the markup next week. The 543 page draft bill authorizes transportation programs for six-years.

According to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, some of the proposed reforms include:

- Streamlines the environmental review and permitting process to cut red tape and accelerate project delivery
- Provides more flexibility and decision-making to states and local governments to allow them to better address their priorities and needs
- Eliminates and consolidates offices within the Department of Transportation
- Establishes a National Surface Transportation and Innovative Finance Bureau to provide assistance to help state, local, and private sector partners move transportation projects forward
- Overhauls federal truck and bus safety grant programs and rulemaking processes
- Reforms truck and bus safety programs and eases administrative burdens on small businesses

DEBT CEILING DEADLINE BUMPED UP

Treasury Secretary Jack Lew notified Congress this week that the new drop-dead date for raising our nation's \$18.1 trillion debt ceiling is now November 3, two days sooner than the previous estimate. Speaker John Boehner and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) are working on a plan to move a stand-alone debt ceiling bill that most certainly will have to depend on Democratic votes for passage. Complicating

congressional and White House negotiations is the uncertainty of who speaks for House Republicans. Speaker Boehner is still committed to stepping down at end of the month. However, Boehner has left the door open for the possibility of remaining in the Speaker's chair until his replacement has been named. House tea party members are demanding that any increase in the debt ceiling be pared with dollar-for-dollar cuts on entitlement/domestic programs while President Obama and congressional Democrats are insisting on the adoption of a clean debt limit bill. On the Senate side, Majority Leader McConnell has vowed to avoid a debt default but is handicapped by his inability to influence his House GOP colleagues. How all this plays out is an open question. Nevertheless, we can expect congressional negotiations over a debt deal to extend through the end of the month, if not into the beginning of November.

SENATE BILL TARGETING SANCTUARY CITIES UP FOR A CLOTURE VOTE

A Senate cloture vote (requiring 60 votes to end debate/filibuster) is scheduled for October 20 on Senator David Vitter's (R-LA) bill, S. 2146, the Stop Sanctuary Policies and Protect Americans Act. The legislation would hold sanctuary jurisdictions accountable for defying federal immigration law, increase penalties for individuals who illegally reenter the United States after being removed, and provide liability protection for State and local law enforcement agencies who cooperate with federal authorities. Under the bill, sanctuary cities who refuse to cooperate with federal officials in enforcing our nation's immigration laws would be denied access to various grant programs including the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), COPS funding and the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP), which reimburses jurisdictions for a portion of the costs they incur incarcerating undocumented criminal aliens. The House passed similar legislation sponsored by Representative Duncan Hunter (R-CA) last July by a party-line vote of 241 to 179 following the killing of Kathryn Steinle in San Francisco by an illegal immigrant with a long, criminal rap sheet.

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