



Item #17-9-9

Government Relations & Public Affairs Committee Information

August 21, 2017

Federal Advocacy Update

Issue: Federal Advocacy Update

Recommendation: None, this item is for information only.

Discussion: There are only a few updates since the previous report that was received at the August Board meeting.

Fiscal Year 2018 Budget

The House and Senate have not made progress on the Fiscal Year 2018 budget. While the new fiscal year starts in October, it is most likely that the current year budget will be extended via continuing resolution and that a full budget will be adopted sometime in calendar year 2018.

The House and Senate Appropriations Committees are not proposing cuts in transportation as deep as the Administration did when it rolled out its budget proposal in May, but the Congressional proposals nevertheless include significant cuts to programs that our region relies on.

President Trump's Infrastructure Proposal

There has been much discussion about the President's proposal to spend \$1 trillion on infrastructure since last year's campaign. However, there has been little progress. Congress and the Administration have been consumed by other policy and political issues to date, and while there were early signs of potential bipartisan compromise, there does not seem to be interest from either the Administration or Congressional Democrats. Equally challenging to the political odds, conservative Republicans are cautious about additional federal spending.

On August 15, the President signed an executive order intended to streamline federal environmental permitting down to two years, and ensure that only one federal agency is responsible for guiding the project through environmental review. The executive order also rescinds the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard, instituted by President Barack Obama, which required new federally funded projects be built to withstand the stronger storms and additional flooding projected to occur as the climate changes. The standard had not taken effect.

Gary Cohn, Director of the National Economic Council, said in a press conference that an infrastructure proposal will be submitted to the House after a tax overhaul bill is passed by the House, sometime between now and Thanksgiving.

Approved by:

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