



## October 29, 2015

Congress has made considerable progress this week on key infrastructure and funding bills:

### Debt Ceiling/Budget Deal

Late on Wednesday, the House passed a bill to suspend the federal debt limit until March 15, 2017 and to increase the budget ceiling for FY'16 and FY'17 spending. The vote was 266 to 167 with only 79 Republicans voting in support. No amendments were permitted. The bill now moves to the Senate where it is expected to pass sometime before November 3 when the government is estimated to go into default. Once passed, congressional appropriators will work to develop an FY'16 year-long, omnibus appropriations bill. The short-term Continuing Resolution (CR) currently funding the government expires on December 11.

### Short-term MAP-21/PTC Extension

On Tuesday, the House passed a bill by voice vote to extend the current MAP-21 surface transportation authorization for an additional three weeks until November 20 and to extend Positive Train Control (PTC) implementation for three years. The Senate passed the bill by voice vote on Wednesday afternoon. The bill now goes to the President. He is expected to sign it before midnight tonight when the current MAP-21 extension expires.

### Long-term Surface Transportation Reauthorization Bill

The House six-year STRRA bill is expected to come to the floor next Tuesday or Wednesday. Any House member wishing to offer amendments to the bill on the floor must file them by 2:00pm on Friday. There will likely be a Manager's amendment comprised of provisions that the "Big 4" bi-partisan T&I Committee leadership supports. Most other floor amendments will likely be opposed by the Committee and therefore less likely to pass. The Energy & Commerce Committee title related to the NHSTA safety program will be added on the House floor.

At this point, it appears unlikely that the House Ways & Means Committee will offer a revenue title which will leave funding for the bill up in the air. The Senate previously passed its companion bill, the DRIVE Act, in July. After House passage, the House and Senate will meet in conference to work out the differences in the two bills, however, Congress will only be in session for a very few days before the November 20 expiration of the latest short-term extension.



## Washington Update

PREPARED BY CATHY CONNOR  
MANAGER OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS



### Export Import Bank Reauthorization

HR 597, a four-year reauthorization of the Bank, passed the House on Tuesday by a vote of 313 to 118. The Senate previously passed identical language as part of the surface transportation DRIVE Act. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), who is not a supporter of the Bank, has said the Senate will not spend floor time on a stand-alone version of an Ex-Im bill, but that Ex-Im reauthorization could move with the long-term surface transportation reauthorization bill.

### Speaker of the House

On Wednesday, the House Republican Caucus voted to nominate Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) as Speaker. The full House will vote on his nomination today.

### FRA Administrator

On Wednesday afternoon, the full Senate confirmed the nomination of Sarah Feinberg to be the Federal Railroad (FRA) Administrator by a voice vote. She is currently serving as the Acting Administrator.