

WSP Washington Update - December 6, 2018 - Interim Update

Congress has been able to complete only a limited number of the FY'19 federal agency annual appropriations bills - FY'19 began on October 1, 2018. In an effort to get beyond the November 6 mid-term elections before tackling the remaining funding bills – including funding for US DOT and other infrastructure programs – Congress passed a temporary Continuing Resolution (CR) through this Friday, December 7. CRs fund programs at the previous fiscal year levels in order to avoid full or partial government shutdowns. Following the death of former President George H.W. Bush, Congress adjourned early this week to participate in the various events honoring him. Earlier today, Congress passed another CR extending through December 21 – the Friday before Christmas. The President is expected to sign it.

Next week, Congress will again focus on passing what will hopefully be full-year FY'19 appropriations bills as part of a multi-bill omnibus or several smaller “minibuses”. The Democratic leadership of the incoming House majority really wants to “clear the decks” of the FY'19 funding bills so they can focus on FY'20 funding priorities when they take office in January. And if there is a government shutdown, they don't want it to be on their watch. President Trump continues to threaten to veto any FY'19 funding bills that don't include significant funding for the border wall.

Completing the appropriations bills is the top priority in the final days of the 115th Congress, however, there are several other bills/issues still under discussion that could be added on to an omnibus appropriations bill(s), including a year-end tax package which extends or reinstates a number of expiring tax credits. The Senate is also working hard to complete a major autonomous vehicle bill. At the end of the year (which is the end of the 115th Congress), all legislation not passed, dies, and must be re-introduced in the next Congress. The 116th Congress will be sworn-in on January 3.