



January 28, 2013

The big news last week was the passage of a temporary debt ceiling deal. The House and Senate voted to suspend the nation's \$16.4 trillion debt ceiling through May 19 in order to avoid the US defaulting on its legal obligations and to buy more time to negotiate budget priorities. The House acted first after Republican leaders dropped their previous demands for deep spending cuts in exchange for a deal on the debt limit. However, House Republicans insisted on including a provision that if either chamber fails to pass an FY'14 budget resolution by April 15 (something one or both bodies have been unable to do for several years), its members will not get paid.

Hurricane Sandy Supplemental Funding

Following House passage of a \$50.7B [supplemental funding bill](#) (HR 152) on January 15 for disaster recovery and mitigation in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, the Senate is finally scheduled to debate and vote on the House-passed bill. At 4:30pm today, the Senate will have one hour of debate and then vote on a Senator Lee (R-UT) amendment to require the cost of the bill be offset with cuts in other federal programs, which is expected to fail. That will be followed by a vote on final passage which is predicted to pass. Since it appears the Senate will pass the House version of the bill without adding any of its own provisions, there is no need for a conference and the bill will go straight to President Obama, who is expected to sign it into law.

More Congressional Committee Assignments

Key House and Senate committees with jurisdiction over infrastructure issues continue to finalize new committee assignments. On the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee, Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA) was named as the Ranking Member on the Aviation Subcommittee and Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA), who recently returned to the committee, will replace Larsen as the Ranking Member on the Coast Guard & Maritime Subcommittee.

At the Committee's organizational meeting, held on January 23, Chairman Shuster announced that Rep. Jimmy Duncan (R-TN), who has been termed limited out of his chairmanship of the Highways & Transit Subcommittee, will serve as the Vice Chair of the full committee and will chair a series of "special panels" on multi-modal issues that span different subcommittees, such as goods movement.

Other previously announced T&I Subcommittee assignments can be found [here](#). A list of the Republican subcommittee vice chairs can be found [here](#).

On the House THUD (DOT funding) Appropriations Subcommittee, Rep. Ed Pastor (D-AZ) will become the new Ranking minority member of the subcommittee. Additional



Democrats will include - Rep. David Price (D-NC) will continue to serve on the subcommittee along with two members newly named to the full committee – Mike Quigley (D-IL), a third-term member and Rep. Tim Ryan (D-OH), a sixth-term member. Neither member has been particularly active to date on transportation issues. A list of the Republican subcommittee members can be found [here](#) and a list of the Democratic members [here](#).

Other News: —————

FTA Webinars on New Starts/Small Starts Final Rule – FTA will host three public webinars to discuss the [New Starts Final Rule](#) published in the Federal Register on January 9 and the related [proposed policy guidance](#). Each webinar will cover the same content with time allotted for [questions and answers](#). The webinars are each limited to 200 people on a first come, first served basis. An audio of the webinar and accompanying slides will be available on the FTA website after the last webinar has concluded. Comments on the proposed guidance are due to FTA by March 11, 2013.

Thursday 01/31/2013 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM Eastern Time

<https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/ftanewsmallstartsrinalrule1/>

Tuesday 02/05/2013 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM Eastern Time

<https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/newsmallstartsfinalrule2/>

Wednesday 02/13/2013 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM Eastern Time

<https://connectdot.connectsolutions.com/ftanewsmallstartsfinalrule3/>

FHWA/FTA MAP-21 Joint Interim Guidance On Accelerated Decision Making in Environmental Reviews – On January 14, FHWA and FTA published interim guidance on MAP-21 section 1319(a), which encourages use of existing authority to use “errata sheets” attached to a draft environmental impact statement in lieu of a separate final EIS document, and section 1319(b), which creates new legislative authority to skip preparation of a separate record of decision (ROD) as the last step in the process, to instead provide for a combined final EIS and ROD. Both provisions are expected to streamline and expedite the NEPA process. Here is a [link](#) to the guidance.

US DOT Standard P3 Contracts Request for Comments - On January 9, FHWA issued a Federal Register notice announcing a P3 listening session which took place on January 16 and a request for comments on the development of “standard P3 transaction model contracts” for highway and transit projects as called for in MAP-21. Comments are due to US DOT/FHWA by May 31, 2013. Here is a [link](#) to the Federal Register notice.