

PB Washington Update - January 29, 2013 - Interim Update

This is a follow-up to the earlier email transmitting the US DOT press release announcing that after months of speculation, US DOT Secretary Ray LaHood will be stepping down. LaHood has indicated he will serve until his replacement is nominated and confirmed, so he could remain in office for several months. There are currently a number of Cabinet vacancies – State (soon to be filled by Senator John Kerry), Defense (former Republican Senator Chuck Hagel has been nominated), Treasury, Interior, Commerce (currently has an Acting Secretary) and Labor, as well as EPA Administrator. It is unclear if the Administration will announce nominees for these positions individually over time or in one or more groups.

A number of people rumored to be under consideration for the US DOT spot may also be potential candidates for other agency leaders. It may be a process of plugging in various names for various vacancies until an acceptable across-the-board team develops. Given the outcry over the lack of diversity in the President's nominations for the national security posts, it is presumed that diversity will be a key criteria when naming additional nominees. As we know from past presidential nomination efforts, being a subject expert is not always a key criteria.

Listed below are a variety of names that have been rumored to be potential replacements for Secretary LaHood. They are grouped by background, not by likelihood of being nominated – some seem very unlikely. However, the nominee could just as easily be someone not currently on the radar screen as was the case when Ray LaHood was nominated at the start of the Obama Administration.

Former Members of Congress – Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (R-TX), Rep. Jim Oberstar (D-MN), Rep. Steve LaTourette (R-OH), Rep. Jerry Costello (D-IL)

Current Members of Congress – Rep. John Mica (R-FL), Rep. Nick Rahall (D-WV)

Former Governors – Ed Rendell (D-PA), Jennifer Granholm (D-MI), Christine Gregoire (D-WA)

Current US DOT/Transportation Leaders – Deputy Secretary John Porcari, FTA Administrator Peter Rogoff, NTSB Chairman Debbie Hersman

Former State DOT CEOs – Gene Conti (NC)

Mayors – Antonio Villarigosa – Los Angeles

Others – San Francisco MTC Executive Director Steve Heminger.