



## Monthly Legislative Report – November

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### November Advocacy Meetings

**Office of Congressman Mike Levin (D-CA)** – We met with Congressman Levin’s staff to discuss a pending earmark request in the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies (THUD) bill of \$3,500,000 for the Coastal Rail Corridor Relocation Study. We also discussed public transportation funding for programs in the Department of Transportation.

**Office of Congressman Lou Correa (D-CA)** – We met with Congressman Correa’s staff to discuss support for Chief Executive Officer Darrell Johnson’s nomination to the Federal System Funding Alternative Advisory Board of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

**Office of Congresswoman Young Kim (R-CA)** – We met with Congresswoman Kim to discuss support for Chief Executive Officer Darrell Johnson’s nomination to the FHWA’s Federal System Funding Alternative Advisory Board. We also followed up on a pending earmark request in the THUD bill of \$4,000,000 for the SR-91 Improvement Project, and the \$3,000,000 request for the OC Loop—Segments A and B.

**Office of Congresswoman Linda Sanchez (D-CA)** – We followed up with Congresswoman Sanchez’s staff to discuss end-of-the-year Ways and Means Committee tax bills that could be considered on the House floor in December.

**Office of Congresswoman Katie Porter (D-CA)** – We met with Congresswoman Porter’s staff to discuss rail safety and transit legislation in the House.

**Office of Congresswoman Michelle Steel (R-CA)** – We met with Congresswoman Steel’s staff to discuss the Continuing Resolution and future funding opportunities for Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA).

**Office of Senator Laphonza Butler (D-CA)** – We followed up with Senator Butler’s staff to discuss our Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) request and the possibility for the House and the Senate to begin the conference process for the THUD Appropriations bill before the end of the year.

**Office of Senator Alex Padilla (D-CA)** – We met with Senator Padilla’s staff to discuss the Senate’s Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and end-of-the-year legislation as it relates to the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) and the THUD bill.

**Office of Congresswoman Grace Napolitano (D-CA)** – We met with Congresswoman Napolitano to discuss the aviation fuel tax issue in the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization (FAA).

**Department of Transportation** – We were in contact with the Department of Transportation’s Office of the Secretary (OST) and Federal Highway Administration staff to discuss and distribute the invitation to the “Interstate 405 Dedication Event”.

**FY24 Appropriations**

On November 16<sup>th</sup>, Congress passed a Continuing Resolution (CR) to extend government funding for the second time in Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24). The CR was passed under ‘Suspension of the Rules’ in the House, a move that requires a two-thirds majority for approval. The CR passed with Democrat support by a vote of 336-95, with some members of the House Freedom Caucus opposing the CR, saying it didn’t do enough to reduce government spending or decrease the deficit.

The House CR’s funding extensions were split into two expiration deadlines. The Agriculture, Energy-Water, MilCon-VA, and THUD bills will have their funding extended to January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024. The eight other appropriations bills are extended to February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024. This approach may trigger a brief 1% across-the-board discretionary spending cut, but it delivers on a promise from newly elected House Speaker Mike Johnson (R-LA) to avoid an end-of-year omnibus showdown with the Senate. The Senate approved the bill by a vote of 87-11, and President Biden signed it into law on November 16<sup>th</sup>. The full text of the Continuing Resolution (H.R. 6363) is available [HERE](#).

**FY24 Appropriations Bills Status**

- House Passed (7 Of 12 )
- Senate Passed (3 Of 12 )

<b>FY24 Appropriations Bill</b>	<b>House Approval</b>	<b>Senate Approval</b>
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration	Pending	11/01/2023
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies	Pending	Pending
Defense	09/28/2023	Pending
Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies	10/26/2023	Pending
Financial Services and General Government	Pending	Pending
Homeland Security	09/28/2023	Pending
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies	11/03/2023	Pending
Labor, Health and Human Services, Education	Pending	Pending
Legislative Branch	11/01/2023	Pending

Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related	07/27/2023	11/01/2023
State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs	09/28/2023	Pending
Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Agencies	Pending	11/01/2023

### **FY 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)**

After lengthy negotiations on the FY 2024 NDAA lawmakers are expected to reach a compromise by the beginning of December. The Senate and House Armed Services committees are working to reconcile differences in their respective versions of the \$886.3 billion bill during the confereing process. Reported disagreements include provisions related to Pentagon policies, and NDAA language restricting American technology flow to adversaries like China. On the Senate side efforts to resolve Sen. Tommy Tuberville's (R-AL) blockade of military nominations persist without an agreement reached. Democratic Senators are also seeking Republican support for a resolution allowing en bloc military promotions. Other challenges include disagreements on humanitarian parole in border policy, affecting emergency funding for Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan.

### **Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Reauthorization Bill Status**

In November Senate transportation leaders debated pilot training requirements in the FAA reauthorization bill. The bill has been stalled since June due to disagreements over a proposal by Sen. John Thune (R-SD), that suggests counting "enhanced training," potentially including flight simulator time, towards the mandatory 1,500 hours of in-flight experience for pilot certification. Sens. Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Ted Cruz (R-TX), and Thune are optimistic about finalizing an agreement soon, with Thune mentioning the possibility of a strong committee vote. This progress is critical as the FAA's funding authority is set to expire on January 1<sup>st</sup>. Meanwhile, the House has already passed its version of the FAA reauthorization bill and is awaiting the Senate's action. The House T& I Committee also held a hearing at the end of the month to discuss the "*Consequences of Delaying a Long-Term FAA Bill.*" It remains unclear if other issues like increasing the pilot retirement age or adding flight slots to specific airports have been resolved. Nevertheless, key members of the relevant House and Senate Committee believe they could move a final bill before the end of the year.

## Congressional Retirements

As of late in November, 7 Senators and 35 Members of the House have announced they are not seeking re-election. The members from California are listed below:

- **Sen. Laphonza Butler (D-CA)**
  - Committees:
    - Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs
    - Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
    - Committee on Rules and Administration
    - Committee on the Judiciary
- **Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA)**
  - Congressional District: California's 32nd
  - Committees:
    - Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
    - Committee on Natural Resources
- **Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA)**
  - Congressional District: California's 13th
  - Committees:
    - Committee on Appropriations
    - Committee on the Budget
    - Committee on Judiciary
    - Committee on Homeland Security
- **Rep. Adam Schiff (D-CA)**
  - Congressional District: California's 28th
  - Committees:
    - Committee on Judiciary
- **Rep. Katie Porter (D-CA)**
  - Congressional District: California's 45th
  - Committees:
    - Committee on Oversight and Accountability
    - Committee on Natural Resources
    - Joint Economic Committee
- **Rep. Tony Cardenas (D-CA)**
  - Congressional District: California's 29<sup>th</sup>
  - Committees:
    - Committee on Energy and Commerce
- **Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-CA)**
  - Congressional District: California's 16<sup>th</sup>
  - Committees:
    - Committee on Energy and Commerce

## **Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Advanced Digital Construction Management Systems program grants**

On November 22<sup>nd</sup>, the FHWA announced the award of \$34 million in grants to 10 state projects under the Advanced Digital Construction Management Systems program. This initiative provides funding for adopting digital construction technologies like 3D modeling to improve project efficiency and aims to reduce delays and costs. The award recipients can be seen below:

<b>Applicant Name</b>	<b>Award</b>
California DOT	\$3,920,800
Connecticut DOT	\$4,497,696
Delaware DOT	\$4,000,000
Illinois DOT	\$4,500,000
Iowa DOT	\$1,501,200
Minnesota DOT	\$2,160,000
Oklahoma DOT	\$3,079,440
Pennsylvania DOT	\$3,910,000
Utah DOT	\$5,000,000
Washington State DOT	\$1,350,000

- For more information on the grant program click [HERE](#).

## **DOT Announces 2024 RAISE Program**

On November 30<sup>th</sup>, the DOT announced the availability of \$1.5 billion in grants for the 2024 RAISE program to support significant transportation projects and assist state and local entities, including municipalities and Tribal governments, in completing important transportation infrastructure projects. Special consideration will be given to projects in impoverished or disadvantaged areas, with a focus on climate change, racial equity, and job creation. The application deadline is February 28, 2024, with announcements due by June 27, 2024. For more information click [HERE](#).

## **Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announces \$343 million in Rail Funding**

On November 30<sup>th</sup>, the FTA announced \$343 million in fiscal year 2024 funding to enhance accessibility in America's older and busier rail transit systems for those with disabilities and mobility needs. The All Stations Accessibility Program (ASAP) aims to assist those reliant on rail systems for daily activities like work and school but also encourages less dependence on personal vehicles. This initiative focuses on stations built before 1990 including the installation of elevators. Applications and eligibility details are available [HERE](#) and the deadline for the program is on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

## **Department of Transportation (DOT) Crash Responder Safety Week**

On November 15<sup>th</sup>, the DOT highlighted safety measures for emergency responders as part of the past Crash Responder Safety Week. The week-long event ran from November 13-17 and was dedicated to increasing public awareness and promoting safety for emergency personnel, including law enforcement, fire, EMS, and towing services. The FHWA honored more than 700,000 individuals trained under the lifesaving Traffic Incident Management (TIM) program.

## **Federal Transit Administration (FTA) proposal on Rail Transit**

On November 15<sup>th</sup>, the FTA released a proposal on the oversight capabilities of State Safety Oversight Agencies (SSOAs) over rail transit. This Notice of Proposed Rulemaking seeks to grant SSOAs the authority for unannounced inspections and mandates the collection of detailed safety data to pursue a more robust risk assessment. The public has until January 16<sup>th</sup> of next year to submit comments on the proposal which includes updated reporting requirements as well as clarified oversight roles throughout transit project lifecycles. For more information click [HERE](#).

## **13 Transportation and Infrastructure Bills Unanimously Approved in Committee**

On November 14<sup>th</sup>, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee approved 13 bills with initiatives to consolidate federal office space, increase public building safety, and having the General Services Administration (GSA) provide public input on building design standards. The committee also passed other bills aiming to enhance FEMA's assistance for individuals with disabilities, promoting disaster-resilient buildings, supporting wildland firefighting, and funding water infrastructure projects. These bills received unanimous approval. We also discussed with the Committee Staff Director other legislative agenda items for next year to include on Water Resources Development Act, (WRDA) and rail safety bills. More information on current bill being considered by the Committee is available [HERE](#).

## **FAA's Advanced Air Mobility Leadership Series**

On November 28<sup>th</sup>, the FAA announced a new virtual thought leadership series titled "Up, Up, and Away: Innovations in Advanced Air Mobility," The seven-part series will run from November 2023 through February 2024 and will feature federal and private sector experts discussing the future of aviation such as advanced air mobility aircraft and drones. The series aims to explore the integration of these technologies safely and sustainably. More information is available [HERE](#).

## **\$3 Billion Federal Grant for Brightline High-Speed Rail**

In early December, it was announced that Brightline West will be receiving a \$3 billion federal grant for the proposed \$12 billion high-speed rail system between Las Vegas and Los

Angeles. This will be officially announced by President Joe Biden in Las Vegas the first week of December. More information is available [HERE](#).

### **Communities Facilities Program Disaster Repair Grants**

This grant program targets repairing eligible essential community facilities that were damaged under Presidentially Declared Disasters for calendar year 2022. The scope of projects includes various community-oriented initiatives such as fire and rescue stations, town halls, healthcare clinics, schools, and more. Eligible facilities must primarily serve rural areas, be situated in rural locations, and cater to a population with a median household income below certain income thresholds relative to the state's nonmetropolitan median household income.

**Eligible Entities:** Municipality, county, district, authority, other political subdivision of a State, or nonprofits.

**Total Program Funding Available:** \$50 million.

**Required Cost Sharing or Match:** A cost match of at least 25% is required.

**Application Deadlines:** Continual until funds are expended.

More information is available [HERE](#).

### **Accelerated Innovation Deployment (AID) Demonstration Grants (Fiscal Years 2023-2026)**

This program aims to accelerate the adoption of innovative highway transportation technologies and practices, with a focus on faster construction of efficient and safe highways and bridges, enhanced safety, mobility, and sustainability.

**Eligible Entities:** State Departments of Transportation, Federal Land Management Agency, Tribal Governments.

**Funding:** \$10 million (FY 2023) and up to \$12.5 million (FYs 2024 - 2026).

**Cost Sharing:** No cost match required.

**Deadline:** January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2024.

More information is available [HERE](#).