



Monthly Legislative Report – January 2019

January Advocacy Meetings

Congressman Gil Cisneros (D-CA) – We facilitated a meeting with Congressman Cisneros' Chief of Staff to discuss OCTA's priority projects to include the OC Streetcar, and the I-405 project. The OCTA CEO also provided an overview of the governing board structure, Measure M2, and other legislative issues and successes over the past few years. We also gave background information to the office on OCTA's work with the Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on the recent FFGA for the OC Street Car and the TIFIA loan process for the I-405.

Congressman Lou Correa (D-CA) – We facilitated a meeting for OCTA with Congressman Correa and his senior staff to thank him for his ongoing support of the OC Streetcar and the I-405 project. We discussed the 2019 OCTA legislative platform and policy objectives for the 116th Congress. We discussed OCTA's 2018-19 strategic board initiatives and ways he might be able to support those initiatives this session of Congress.

Congresswoman Linda Sanchez (D-CA) – We facilitated a meeting for OCTA with Congresswoman Sanchez to discuss OCTA's 2019 legislative platform and provide an overview of OCTA's major accomplishments over the last two years. We discussed the progress on the OC Streetcar and the I-405 project. We also gave an update on the potential Highway Bill and reauthorization priorities and other issues surrounding local sales tax and the Wayfair decision in a separate meeting with the Congresswoman's staff.

Congressman Harley Rouda (D-CA) – We facilitated a meeting for OCTA with Congressman Rouda and his staff. During the meeting OCTA CEO provided an overview of OCTA's priority projects like the OC Streetcar and the I-405 project. We discussed the 2019 legislative platform and a number of recent accomplishments and successes. We also discussed upcoming issues with regard to Surface Transportation reauthorization and finding new revenue sources to support the Highway Trust Fund.

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (Majority) – We facilitated a meeting for OCTA with senior professional staff to House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio to discuss the Committee's goals and priorities in the 116th session. We discussed the possibility of a large infrastructure package this year and possible opportunities to include favorable language early in the process. We discussed the OCTA 2019 legislative platform and provided an overview of recent accomplishments. OCTA staff also gave an update on the County's Measure M2 program. We also discussed the possibility of a limited return to congressionally directed spending (earmarks) during the Highway Bill process.

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (Minority) – We facilitated a meeting for OCTA with the Deputy Staff Director for the full Committee (minority) to discuss the possibility and timeline for a broad infrastructure package in 2019. We also discussed possible green/climate initiatives. We also discussed OCTA's 2019 legislative platform and strategic board initiatives for 2019-20 and thanked the office for their help and support with the OC Street Car's FFGA at FTA.

Congressman Mike Levin (D-CA) and Congresswoman Katie Porter (D-CA) – We facilitated a joint meeting for OCTA with both Congressman Levin and Congresswoman Porter. The OCTA CEO provided an overview of OCTA's governing board structure, Measure M2, and priority projects. We also discussed the OC Streetcar and the I-405 project and our spoke about OCTA successes with 91 Express Lanes.

Congressman Alan Lowenthal (D-CA) – We facilitated a meeting for OCTA with Congressman Lowenthal and his staff to give an update on the OC Streetcar and the I-405 project. We also discussed the 2019 legislative platform and new strategic board initiatives. We also discussed priorities for the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in 2019 and Congressman's legislative efforts regarding freight funding.

Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA) – We met with senior staff to Senator Feinstein to give an update on the OC Streetcar and the I-405 project. We discussed the timeline for the FY19 and FY20 Transportation-HUD appropriations bill and the likelihood of a broad infrastructure package in 2019. We also discussed the board's strategic initiatives for 2019-20 and expressed our thanks for the Senator's ongoing support for OCTA priorities. We also discussed challenges regarding no emissions buses.

Senate Banking Committee – We met with senior professional staff from the Senate Banking Committee to provide an update on OCTA projects and priorities to include the OC Streetcar and the I-405 project. We also discussed issues surrounding no emission busses, transit asset management plans, and bus safety.

Department of Transportation – We facilitated a meeting for OCTA with the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy at the Department of Transportation to provide an update on the I-405 project. We also discussed ways to improve and streamline the TIFIA loan process.

FY19 Appropriations and Shutdown Update

The 35-day partial government shutdown was ended on January 25th when the President signed a Continuing Resolution ([H.J.Res. 28](#)). The Continuing Resolution (CR) will provide funding at fiscal year 2018 (FY18) enacted levels for the seven remaining appropriations bills. The CR will expire on February 15th. If Congress is unable to reach a deal by the end of the then, it is possible that there will be another partial government shutdown.

On Wednesday, January 30th, the House and Senate Homeland Security Appropriations Committees met for a conference committee to negotiate the Homeland Security bill and border security solutions. Senators on the panel included Richard Shelby (R-AL), Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), John Hoeven (R-ND), Roy Blunt (R-MO), Patrick Leahy (D-VT), Dick Durbin (D-IL) and Jon Tester (D-MT). House conferees included Reps. Nita Lowey (D-NY), Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA), Barbara Lee (D-CA), Pete Aguilar (D-CA), David Price (D-NC), Henry Cuellar (D-TX), Kay Granger (R-TX), Chuck Fleischmann (R-TN), Tom Graves (R-GA) and Steven Palazzo (R-MS).

During and immediately following the conference committee, senior House Democrats like House Appropriations Chairwoman Nita Lowey (D-NY) softened their tone on border security saying that nothing is off the table, including funding for a physical barrier. The Chairwoman also seems to be in agreement with House Appropriations Committee Ranking Member Kay Granger (R-TX) on the need for increased money for immigration judges, detection technology and resources to help meet humanitarian needs of migrants, especially children. If conference committee negotiators are able to produce a deal on border security funding, it is likely to lead to the passage of the seven remaining FY19 appropriations bills so that Congress can begin working on the FY20 appropriations bills.

Orange County Delegation Committee Assignments

This month a number of subcommittee assignments were finalized in the House and the Senate. The Committee assignments for the Orange County Delegation in the 116th Congress are as follows:

Rep. Alan Lowenthal

- House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
 - Highways and Transit Subcommittee
 - Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee
 - Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Subcommittee
 - Railroads, Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee
- House Natural Resources Committee
 - Chair of Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee
 - Federal Lands Subcommittee
 - Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee

Rep. Mike Levin

- House Veterans' Affairs Committee
 - Chairman of Economic Opportunity Subcommittee
 - Heath Subcommittee
- House Natural Resources Committee
 - Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee
 - Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee

Rep. Harley Rouda

- House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
- House Oversight and Reform Committee
 - Environment Subcommittee

Rep. Lou Correa

- House Judiciary Committee
 - Immigration and Border Security Subcommittee
 - Court, Intellectual Property, and the Internet Subcommittee
- House Homeland Security Committee
 - Oversight and Management Efficiency Subcommittee
 - Chair of Transportation and Maritime Security Subcommittee

Rep. Katie Porter

- House Financial Services Committee
 - Consumer Protection and Financial Institutions Subcommittee
 - Investor Protection, Entrepreneurship and Capital Markets Subcommittee

Rep. Gil Cisneros

- House Veterans' Affairs Committee
- House Armed Services Committee
 - Military and Personnel Subcommittee
 - Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee

Rep. Linda Sanchez

- House Ways and Means Committee
 - Oversight Subcommittee
 - Select Revenue Measures Subcommittee
 - Social Security Subcommittee

Sen. Dianne Feinstein

- Senate Appropriations Committee
 - Vice Chair of Energy and Water Development Subcommittee
 - Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Subcommittee
 - Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Subcommittee
 - Defense Subcommittee
 - Transportation, Housing and Urban Development and Related Agencies Subcommittee
 - Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Subcommittee
- Senate Committee on Rules and Administration
- Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary
- Senate Select Committee on Intelligence

Sen. Kamala Harris

- Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee

- Senate Committee on Budget
- Senate Judiciary Committee
- Senate Committee on Intelligence

Infrastructure Update

The first hearing by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee led by Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-OR) will be held on Thursday, February 7th. The hearing will be entitled "*The cost of doing nothing: Why investing in our nation's infrastructure cannot wait.*" The hearing will examine the current state of the nation's roads, bridges, transit systems, ports, airports, and the backlog of maintenance and repair needs. After the announcement of the hearing, Ranking Member Sam Graves (R-MO) said that this will be the first of a series of hearings that both he and Chairman DeFazio hopes will lay the groundwork for a broad infrastructure package that hope to move this year followed by a Surface Transportation Reauthorization. Ranking Member Graves also said that while such legislation would include provisions for ports, airports, and maritime infrastructure needs, he expects the vast majority of an infrastructure bill to be focused on roads and bridges, which was confirmed separately with his senior committee staff. This would include the maintenance and repair of existing road and bridge infrastructure as well as the inclusion of new projects in areas with a great national significance, specifically citing Southern California goods movement and the Northeast Corridor. According to the Ranking Member, all funding options are on the table.

On January 29th the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee held a hearing to examine the nomination of Nicole Nason to be Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Some of the issues that were discussed during the hearing included funding sources for infrastructure and the Highway Trust Fund and climate change. Regarding a long-term funding source for infrastructure and the Highway Trust Fund, Nason said that the Administration is also considering all available options. Nason also pledged to work with Congress on their concerns regarding climate change. The Senate has yet to schedule a vote on her confirmation.

FTA Grant Disbursements

On January 29th the Federal Transit Administration announced that they hope to distribute transit grants before mid-February. To prepare for the possibility of another partial shutdown, they have begun processing disbursements and grant payments to transit agencies in response to requests sent during January. A spokesperson for the FTA said they are "working expeditiously to process approximately \$531 million in grant payments requested through its financial system that were submitted during the lapse in appropriations."

Executive Order on American Steel

On January 31st the President announced his plans to sign an Executive Order (EO) directing federal agencies to encourage the use of more American-made steel of infrastructure projects that receive federal funding or financing. The EO would direct federal agencies to encourage the recipients of loans, loan guarantees, grants and interest subsidies to meet Buy American standards. In addition to steel, the EO would also encourage the use of American-produced concrete, aluminum, and other products.