



Monthly Legislative Report – January 2025

January Advocacy Meetings

House Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee, Majority Staff – We met with Committee staff to discuss recent Executive Orders and the possible implications for authorized transportation funding. We also discussed transportation programs that may be affected by possible budget reconciliation-related provisions.

Office of Congresswoman Young Kim (R-CA) – We met with Congresswoman Kim’s staff to discuss the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Grant Program (formerly known as the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Grant) for the State Route 91 (SR-91) Multimodal Improvement Project – Segment 2 (Project) also referred to as Segment 2. Congresswoman Kim has agreed to lead a support letter to the new Secretary of Transportation, Sean Duffy.

Office of Congressman Lou Corre (D-CA) – We met with the Congressman’s transportation staff to discuss the SR-91 Multimodal Improvement Project. At the time of this report, Congressman Correa’s office is reviewing a draft support letter.

Office of Senator Adam Schiff (D-CA) – We met with the Senator’s staff to schedule a briefing regarding the LOSSAN Corridor and other passenger rail funding issues.

Office of Congresswoman Norma Torres (D-CA) – We met with senior staff for the Congresswoman to discuss the Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) Community Project Funding (CPF) request timeline and possible programmatic requests for passenger rail. The Congresswoman told us she has a tentative internal deadline of February 28th for possible programmatic requests. Staff are operating on the assumption that Appropriations Committee deadlines will be sometime in March or early April.

Congressman David Rouzer (R-NC) – We met with Congressman Rouzer to discuss the timing for a possible surface transportation reauthorization draft and committee markup. We also discussed with Congressman Rouzer’s staff possible field hearings in Southern California in 2025.

Office of Congressman Derek Tran (D-CA) – We followed up with Congressman Tran’s office on possible timing for Community Project funding requests for FY 26.

Office of Congressman Mike Levin (D-CA) – We followed up with Rep. Levin’s staff to discuss the potential impact on recently awarded transportation grants from the Trump executive orders targeting specific programs and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Office of Congressman Mike Simpson (R-ID) – We discussed with the Congressman on a recent call the timing for the FY25 appropriations bills and potential funding reductions that may be targeted for grant programs in those funding bills.

New Executive Orders & The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memorandum

Much of the attention in Washington, DC, the last week of January was focused on a memo/directive released late on January 27th by the Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that appeared to call for a government-wide pause on all grants, loans, and other financial assistance programs. As outlined in the memo, the temporary pause would allow OMB and the Administration to conduct an across-the-board review to ensure all funding programs aligned with the President's initiatives and agenda. Senior White House staff sought to clarify that the pause was limited to only a small number of programs they believed violated the President's previous Executive Orders (EO), which have ended certain environmental and/or Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) programs. However, the memo was written so broadly that there was widespread confusion at all levels of government (federal, state, and local) that had been awarded but had not received grant funding as to its scope.

President Trump had issued an Executive Order the previous week that appeared to call for ending certain programs from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) was similarly written in such broad language that OMB was forced to provide additional guidance after the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) briefly paused all repayments to states. In a similar fashion, OMB was once again forced to release additional guidance in the form of a two-page document initially circulated to federal agencies and Hill offices. That guidance document, however, failed to provide sufficient clarification, especially given that transportation programs and grants were potentially implicated.

After several lawsuits were filed (both by NGOs and dozens of state Attorney Generals) and a federal judge issued a "brief administrative stay" to block the funding pause, the White House and OMB ultimately rescinded the directive. Although the funding pause has been put on hold for now, the White House has said that they plan to pursue a full government-wide review of funding programs as originally planned.

In the coming weeks, we expect that this review may likely result in OMB redirecting or rescinding funding for targeted programs, likely setting up a legal challenge over the President's ability to withhold certain funds approved by Congress in the annual appropriations bills.

Budget Reconciliation Update

During the last week of January, House Republicans gathered in Doral, Florida, for a three-day retreat to discuss the legislative agenda for the 119th Congress that includes a path forward on the budget reconciliation process, which would allow the Senate to approve some of President Trump's first 100-day legislative agenda with a simple majority. House Speaker

Mike Johnson (R-LA) had hoped to reach a consensus on the framework of the reconciliation package and to have a budget resolution drafted and ready for consideration by the Budget Committee the first week of February. However, at this time of this report it appears much disagreement among the Republican caucus remains on what needs to be included in the ultimate budget blueprint.

More specifically, there are reported divisions between the conservative House Freedom Caucus (HFC) and more centrist members of the caucus over issues including but not limited to Medicaid cuts, debt ceiling, FY25 spending levels, possible funding recissions, and addressing the State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction as sought by many blue-state Republicans. More bicameral discussions regarding a budget resolution package are expected when the House returns to session on February 4th. Earlier in January, the House Budget Committee was seemingly on track to vote in February on its version of the resolution needed to unlock the reconciliation process, which would allow Republicans to write a filibuster-proof fiscal package. GOP leaders last week had floated a "floor" of a little over \$300 billion in 10-year savings targets for the prospective budget blueprint.

Updates to Buy America Requirements at U.S. Department of Transportation

In January the U.S. Department of Transportation's FHWA announced a new final rule that eliminated a longstanding waiver for manufactured products used in federal-aid highway projects. This rule was part of the Biden-Harris Administration's broader effort to boost domestic manufacturing and better align FHWA rules with broader Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act provisions under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The rule does not change existing Buy America requirements for iron and steel products but provides clearer definitions for manufactured products versus iron and steel products. These guidelines, as well as other BABA Act provisions, are likely to be revisited in the next surface transportation authorization.

At the time of this report, it seems likely that further implementation of the rule will likely be delayed again based on President Trump's Executive Order that, in effect, pauses all federal rulemaking to give the incoming administration an opportunity to review and potentially modify rulemaking efforts to align with its policy priorities. All federal agencies were also told to "consider further delaying, or publishing for notice and comment, proposed rules further delaying such rules beyond the 60-day period."

Trump's Deregulatory Executive Order

On January 21st, President Trump issued an executive order focused on advancing President Trump's deregulatory agenda by requiring agencies to offset regulatory efforts by identifying at least two existing regulations to be repealed for each new rule proposed or finalized. This new EO revives President Trump's first-term deregulatory executive order, although it is not yet clear whether or how this approach will feature in the new administration's regulatory agenda for 2025.

The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) Established

President Trump issued an executive order that established DOGE as an Executive Office of the President. The order repurposes the existing United States Digital Service by publicly renaming it the “United States DOGE Service” (USDS) and creating a USDS Administrator position that will report to the White House Chief of Staff.

The order further established a “U.S. DOGE Service Temporary Organization” headed by the USDS Administrator that is dedicated to advancing the President’s 18-month DOGE agenda. The temporary organization terminates on July 4, 2026. The order also requires each agency to establish its own DOGE Team, consisting of at least four employees, that will advise the agency head on implementing the DOGE agenda. Agency heads must ensure that DOGE Teams coordinate with USDS. At the time of this report, the USDOT DOGE team has not been named. This DOGE team will likely have major influence over new and existing discretionary grant programs at USDOT.

Other DOGE team members are already targeting agencies such as the U.S. Agency for International Development. For example, at the end of the month, the USAID website went dark. The agency’s Washington-based workers received an email Sunday telling them not to come into the office at the start of February. Amid the turmoil, Republicans are criticizing the agency’s use of taxpayer money, and some are calling for its absorption into the State Department. Democrats, meanwhile, call the issue a constitutional crisis and are discussing ways to prevent other similar impacts at other agencies such as the Department of Education.

New Secretary of the United States Department of Transportation Sworn into Office

After a 77-22 Senate confirmation vote, Sean Duffy was officially sworn in as the 20th Secretary of the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) on January 28th. One of Secretary Duffy’s first official acts was signing a memorandum directing staff to start the process of resetting Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards and eliminating the electric vehicle mandate. The memorandum signed by the Secretary directs the Office of the General Counsel, the Office of the Undersecretary for Policy, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to immediately initiate a rulemaking to rescind or replace all existing CAFE standards.

Later in the week, Secretary Duffy issued another memorandum that establishes a framework for ensuring that economic analysis plays a critical role in the development of transportation policies, programs, and other activities such as discretionary grant award decisions. The order emphasizes the importance of using sound economic principles to guide decision-making and regulatory actions within the USDOT. USDOT offices and agencies must document and justify their economic analyses and conduct regular reviews of their economic analysis tools. We expect each USDOT organization to provide additional guidance on how they will evaluate grants in the coming weeks as the new Administrators of the organization (*i.e.*, Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Aviation

Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration, and the Maritime Administration) are Senate confirmed.

Senate Continues Cabinet Confirmation Hearings

Throughout January, the Senate conducted confirmation hearings for President Trump's cabinet nominees and other senior Administration officials. Already, eight of Trump's 31 nominations have been confirmed and sworn into office.

In addition to the USDOT Secretary, the list of other confirmed nominees at the time of this report includes the following:

- Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent (68 Senate votes)
- Interior Secretary Doug Burgum (79 Senate votes)
- Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth (51 Senate votes)
- Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem (59 Senate votes)
- Central Intelligence Agency Director John Ratcliffe (74 Senate votes)
- Secretary of State Marco Rubio (99 Senate votes)
- Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin (56 Senate Votes)

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Roster Announced

On January 22nd, Transportation and Infrastructure Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO) and Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-WA) announced the rosters of the Committee's six subcommittees. Those Committee assignments are as follows:

Subcommittee on Aviation

REPUBLICANS

CHAIRMAN TROY E. NEHLS (TX)
THOMAS MASSIE (KY)
SCOTT PERRY (PA)
BRIAN J. MAST (FL)
PETE STAUBER (MN)
TIM BURCHETT (TN)
DUSTY JOHNSON (SD)
JEFFERSON VAN DREW (NJ)
TRACEY MANN (KS)
BURGUSS OWENS (UT)
TONY WIED (WI)
TOM BARRETT (MI)
NICHOLAS J. BEGICH, III (AK)
ROBERT P. BRESNAHAN, JR. (PA)
JEFF HURD (CO)
JEFFERSON SHREVE (IN)
ADDISON P. MCDOWELL (NC)
BRAD KNOTT (NC)
KIMBERLYN KING-HINDS (MP)

DEMOCRATS

RANKING MEMBER STEVE COHEN (TN)
SHARICE DAVIDS (KS)
HILLARY J. SCHOLTEN (MI)
ROBERT GARCIA (CA)
HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR. (GA)
ANDRÉ CARSON (IN)
JULIA BROWNLEY (CA)
FREDERICA S. WILSON (FL)
MARK DESAULNIER (CA)
VALERIE P. FOUSHEE (NC)
CHRISTOPHER R. DELUZIO (PA)
NELLIE POU (NJ)
LAURA GILLEN (NY)
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON (DC)
DINA TITUS (NV)
SALUD O. CARBAJAL (CA)
GREG STANTON (AZ)
JESÚS G. "CHUY" GARCÍA (IL)
RICK LARSEN (WA) (*ex officio*)

ROBERT F. ONDER, JR. (MO)
VACANT
SAM GRAVES (MO) (*ex officio*)

Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation

REPUBLICANS

CHAIRMAN MIKE EZELL (MS)
DANIEL WEBSTER (FL)
BRIAN J. MAST (FL)
JEFFERSON VAN DREW (NJ)
NICHOLAS J. BEGICH, III (AK)
ADDISON P. MCDOWELL (NC)
VACANT
SAM GRAVES (MO) (*ex officio*)

DEMOCRATS

RANKING MEMBER SALUD O. CARBAJAL (CA)
CHRIS PAPPAS (NH)
MARILYN STRICKLAND (WA)
HILLARY J. SCHOLTEN (MI)
ROBERT GARCIA (CA)
JOHN GARAMENDI (CA)
RICK LARSEN (WA) (*ex officio*)

Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management

REPUBLICANS

CHAIRMAN SCOTT PERRY (PA)
MIKE EZELL (MS)
KEVIN KILEY (CA)
TOM BARRETT (MI)
ROBERT P. BRESNAHAN, JR. (PA)
KIMBERLYN KING-HINDS (MP)
MIKE KENNEDY (UT)
ROBERT F. ONDER, JR. (MO)
SAM GRAVES (MO) (*ex officio*)

DEMOCRATS

RANKING MEMBER GREG STANTON (AZ)
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON (DC)
KRISTEN MCDONALD RIVET (MI)
SHOMARI FIGURES (AL)
JOHN GARAMENDI (CA)
DINA TITUS (NV)
LAURA FRIEDMAN (CA)
RICK LARSEN (WA) (*ex officio*)

Subcommittee on Highways and Transit

REPUBLICANS

CHAIRMAN DAVID ROUZER (NC)
ERIC A. "RICK" CRAWFORD (AR)
DANIEL WEBSTER (FL)
THOMAS MASSIE (KY)
BRIAN BABIN (TX)
MIKE BOST (IL)
DOUG LAMALFA (CA)
BRUCE WESTERMAN (AR)
PETE STAUBER (MN)
TIM BURCHETT (TN)
DUSTY JOHNSON (SD)
JEFFERSON VAN DREW (NJ)
TROY E. NEHLS (TX)
BURGESS OWENS (UT)
ERIC BURLISON (MO)
MIKE COLLINS (GA)
KEVIN KILEY (CA)
VINCE FONG (CA)
TONY WIED (WI)
TOM BARRETT (MI)
ROBERT P. BRESNAHAN, JR. (PA)

DEMOCRATS

RANKING MEMBER ELEANOR HOLMES
NORTON (DC)
JOHN GARAMENDI (CA)
HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR. (GA)
JARED HUFFMAN (CA)
JULIA BROWNLEY (CA)
MARK DESAULNIER (CA)
JESÚS G. "CHUY" GARCÍA (IL)
CHRIS PAPPAS (NH)
MARILYN STRICKLAND (WA)
PATRICK RYAN (NY)
VAL T. HOYLE (OR)
EMILIA STRONG SYKES (OH)
JERROLD NADLER (NY)
NELLIE POU (NJ)
KRISTEN MCDONALD RIVET (MI)
LAURA FRIEDMAN (CA)
LAURA GILLEN (NY)
SHOMARI FIGURES (AL)
STEVE COHEN (TN)
DINA TITUS (NV)

JEFF HURD (CO)
JEFFERSON SHREVE (IN)
ADDISON P. MCDOWELL (NC)
DAVID J. TAYLOR (OH)
BRAD KNOTT (NC)
KIMBERLYN KING-HINDS (MP)
MIKE KENNEDY (UT)
SAM GRAVES (MO) (*ex officio*)

SALUD O. CARBAJAL (CA)
GREG STANTON (AZ)
SHARICE DAVIDS (KS)
SETH MOULTON (MA)
ROBERT GARCIA (CA)
RICK LARSEN (WA) (*ex officio*)

Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials

REPUBLICANS

CHAIRMAN DANIEL WEBSTER (FL)
DAVID ROUZER (NC)
MIKE BOST (IL)
DOUG LAMALFA (CA)
BRUCE WESTERMAN (AR)
PETE STAUBER (MN)
TIM BURCHETT (TN)
DUSTY JOHNSON (SD)
TROY E. NEHLS (TX)
TRACEY MANN (KS)
BURGESS OWENS (UT)
ERIC BURLISON (MO)
VINCE FONG (CA)
NICHOLAS J. BEGICH, III (AK)
JEFFERSON SHREVE (IN)
DAVID J. TAYLOR (OH)
MIKE KENNEDY (UT)
SAM GRAVES (MO) (*ex officio*)

DEMOCRATS

RANKING MEMBER DINA TITUS (NV)
ANDRÉ CARSON (IN)
SETH MOULTON (MA)
VALERIE P. FOUSHEE (NC)
CHRISTOPHER R. DELUZIO (PA)
JERROLD NADLER (NY)
JESÚS G. "CHUY" GARCÍA (IL)
STEVE COHEN (TN)
HENRY C. "HANK" JOHNSON, JR. (GA)
FREDERICA S. WILSON (FL)
PATRICK RYAN (NY)
EMILIA STRONG SYKES (OH)
LAURA FRIEDMAN (CA)
MARK DESAULNIER (CA)
RICK LARSEN (WA) (*ex officio*)

Subcommittee on Water Resources and the Environment

REPUBLICANS

CHAIRMAN MIKE COLLINS (GA)
ERIC A. "RICK" CRAWFORD (AR)
THOMAS MASSIE (KY)
BRIAN BABIN (TX)
MIKE BOST (IL)
DOUG LAMALFA (CA)
BRUCE WESTERMAN (AR)
BRIAN J. MAST (FL)
TRACEY MANN (KS)
ERIC BURLISON (MO)
KEVIN KILEY (CA)
VINCE FONG (CA)
TONY WIED (WI)
JEFF HURD (CO)
DAVID J. TAYLOR (OH)
BRAD KNOTT (NC)
ROBERT F. ONDER, JR. (MO)
VACANT
SAM GRAVES (MO) (*ex officio*)

DEMOCRATS

RANKING MEMBER FREDERICA S. WILSON (FL)
JOHN GARAMENDI (CA)
JARED HUFFMAN (CA)
PATRICK RYAN (NY)
VAL T. HOYLE (OR)
EMILIA STRONG SYKES (OH)
LAURA FRIEDMAN (CA)
SHOMARI FIGURES (AL)
JULIA BROWNLEY (CA)
MARK DESAULNIER (CA)
CHRIS PAPPAS (NH)
HILLARY J. SCHOLTEN (MI)
NELLIE POU (NJ)
LAURA GILLEN (NY)
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON (DC)
RICK LARSEN (WA) (*ex officio*)

House T&I Subcommittee Hearing on America's Freight and Passenger Rail Network

On January 23rd, the House T&I subcommittee for Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials held a hearing to discuss passenger and freight rail issues and the state of the railroad industry, including potential legislative considerations for a surface reauthorization bill. The hearing witness list included the following:

- Mr. Ian Jefferies, President and Chief Executive Officer, Association of American Railroads
- Mr. Chuck Baker, President, American Short Line and Regional Railroad Association
- Mr. Joe Dalosio, Chairman, National Railroad Construction & Maintenance Association
- Mr. Jared Cassity, Alternate National Safety and Legislative Director, Sheet Metal Air Rail Transportation-Transportation Division (SMART-TD)

During the hearing, witnesses and committee members discussed ways to improve and expand passenger rail in key corridors, including Sothern California. Both Chairman Webster and Ranking Member Titus acknowledged that passenger rail works best where demand is high and when the private sector is involved. The current surface transportation authorization expires this Congress, and this hearing marks the beginning of discussions regarding passenger rail infrastructure needs and ways to incorporate a rail title in the upcoming legislation.