

Memorandum

From: Capitol Transportation Consulting and Pavluchuk & Associates
To: James Corless, Executive Director
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Election Update

With the recent election, there are a lot of changes happening in Washington, D.C. Below is a topline analysis of what those changes mean for transportation at the White House, U.S. DOT, and in Congress.

President

President Trump has been an advocate for increased infrastructure funding. During his first term, he made it a high priority for his Administration and outlined a proposal that focused on financing and streamlining. It's not clear whether transportation and infrastructure will remain a priority in this Administration as there has been less focus on the topic during the election.

President Trump has made some comments on transportation-related issues, including a commitment to modernizing infrastructure like New York's Penn Station and reassessing current electric vehicle mandates and incentives. He also highlighted the need to rebuild our nation's infrastructure in his nomination of Sean Duffy to U.S. DOT (see below).

U.S. Department of Transportation

President-elect Trump has nominated Sean Duffy, a former Wisconsin congressman and Fox News contributor, as the next Secretary of Transportation. Duffy's background includes service on the House Financial Services Committee and experience in media. He doesn't have an extensive background in transportation.

President-elect Trump said "Sean will use his experience and the relationships he has built over many years in Congress to rebuild our nation's infrastructure and usher in a golden age of travel." Trump also credited Mr. Duffy with clearing "extensive Legislative hurdles to build the largest road and bridge project in Minnesota History." Mr. Duffy was a co-sponsor of bipartisan legislation, led by Senator Amy Klobuchar, Democrat of Minnesota, to support the St. Croix River bridge project, which connects Wisconsin and Minnesota.

While some of President-elect Trump's nominations have sparked some controversy, Mr. Duffy's nomination has not met similar opposition. For example, the lead Democrat on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee said, "Transportation policy has a long bipartisan history, and I look forward to continuing to maintain the tradition under former Representative Sean Duffy's leadership and working together to pass the next surface transportation authorization, creating more jobs, if he is confirmed."

Congressional Update – House of Representatives

The Republican Party will keep control of the U.S. House of Representatives into the next Congress. However, while a handful of final races are being decided, there will be a tight margin for votes. This could mean that votes in the House may be difficult as they move major legislation.

It isn't clear yet who will lead the key transportation Committee in the House. Current Transportation and Infrastructure Committee chairman Sam Graves (R-MO) is facing a six-year term limit on his service as leader of Republicans on T&I. He has asked for a waiver of this limit, but it's unclear whether it will be granted. If Graves does not get a waiver, then the contest for chairman of the committee will likely be between Rep. Rick Crawford (R-AR), the Highways and Transit Subcommittee chairman, and David Rouzer (R-NC), chairman of the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee. Rep. Rick Larsen (D-WA) will remain as the ranking member of the committee.

Congressional Update – Senate

Republicans will also control the Senate with a likely 53 to 47 majority. The incoming majority caucus elected John Thune (R-SD) to replace retiring Mitch McConnell (R-KY) as Majority Leader. John Thune previously led the Senate Commerce Committee and has held significant roles in advancing surface transportation legislation.

There are several committees with jurisdiction over transportation and those will experience some leadership changes. EPW, the highway committee, is likely to be Chaired by Senators Capito (R-WV) and Whitehouse (D-RI). Banking, the transit committee, is likely to be chaired by Senators Scott (R-SC) and Warren (D-MA). Finally, the appropriations committee will continue to be chaired by Senator Collins (R-ME) and Murray (D-WA).

Of note, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law was drafted by a "Gang of Ten" bipartisan Senators. Half of those ten are no longer in Congress making it unlikely that the group would reprise its role in the infrastructure debate.

SACOG Priorities

The changes in DC will impact topline priorities at U.S. DOT, as well as the surface transportation reauthorization that Congress will be working on next year. While the people and Administration priorities change, much of transportation has traditionally been bipartisan. The federal team will continue to work with our delegation and key associations to advance our legislative and policy priorities like Green Means Go. We are particularly focused on supporting additional funding opportunities through key planning associations like AMPO and NARC, which are bipartisan. We are also working with like-minded MPOs around the country to advance shared priorities.