

Legislative Update
January 17, 2025

FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.

Speaker of the House

The House of Representatives was in session on January 3, 2025, to conclude the 118th Congress and begin the 119th. However, the House cannot start formal activities before one crucial decision is made: Speaker of the House. Republicans and Democrats in the House put up their preferred candidates, Mike Johnson (R-LA) and Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) respectively, and Mike Johnson ultimately came out on top after the first roll call vote. Now that Speaker Johnson is in place, the House can resume its activities and formally begin this session of Congress.

Secretary of Transportation

On January 15, 2025, the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation met to hold the nomination hearing of Sean Duffy for the position of Secretary of the Department of Transportation. The nomination hearing was productive, and members from both sides of the aisle had overlapping priorities for the potential new secretary involving safety in aviation, roadways, passenger railways, and any other mode of transportation for Americans; Mr. Duffy stated he is "committed to a legacy of safety." Another critical matter brought to attention at multiple points is the reauthorization of a surface transportation bill. Mr. Duffy committed to working with the committee to make an insightful decision when the surface transportation bill comes due next year and to work with each member to assist in bringing the transportation sector up to standards during his potential tenure. Mr. Duffy's nomination will now go to the full Senate to be voted on where he will need 51 Senators to vote in favor of his confirmation to receive the position.

Draft Designation of National Multimodal Freight Network and State Input Process

AGENCY: Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), Maritime Administration (MARAD), Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), and Pipelines and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA), Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Request for Comments, response to comments

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT or Department) is publishing a draft designation of the National Multimodal Freight Network (NMFN or Network) as required Federal law. The designation is informed by the comments received on a notice published by DOT on April 12, 2024. DOT is also using this notice to request comments or proposed modifications to the draft Network prior to designating the Network. Once the Network is designated by DOT, States will have the opportunity to submit additional designations through the "State Input" process required by statute.

[Federal Register :: Draft Designation of National Multimodal Freight Network and State Input Process](#)

FROM AUSTIN

The 89th session of the Texas Legislature convened on Tuesday, January 14, and will adjourn on June 2, 2025.

On Monday, January 13, 2025, Texas Comptroller Hegar announced the state's biennial revenue estimate, which tells state lawmakers how much they may spend when they write a new two-year budget for FY 2026-2027. Comptroller Hegar highlighted the importance of investing in infrastructure to reduce traffic congestion alongside construction work on roads, housing affordability, and education as

areas where Texas should spend the projected \$194.6 billion in general revenue over the 2026-27 biennium. The amount represents a 1.1% drop from what the state's lawmakers had at their disposal during the last budget cycle. The last biennium saw a \$30 billion surplus, which was seen as "once in a lifetime." This biennium includes a \$23.8 billion surplus as a result of the previous session's economic and fiscal policies. The Comptroller estimates \$5.6 billion will be reserved from 2024-25 oil and natural gas tax collections for transfers to the State Highway Fund.

On Tuesday, January 14, 2025, Texas House of Representatives elected Dustin Burrows as their Speaker for the 89th Legislative Session. Representative Burrows, a Lubbock Republican, has substantial political experience in Texas and is anticipated to maintain the same power structure as his predecessor, Beaumont Representative Dade Phelan. Burrows' win came despite efforts of certain party members to push moderate Republicans out of power.

HIGHLIGHTED BILLS

Tolls

SB 720 Hall – Relating to the prohibition of lane restrictions on a portion of Interstate Highway 635. Would prohibit lane restrictions, including charging a toll or implementing managed lanes, on the portion of Interstate Highway 635 between its intersection with Interstate Highway 30 and its intersection with U.S. Highway 75.

Revenue

SJR 33 Miles – Proposing a constitutional amendment to permit additional uses of certain dedicated general revenue transferred each fiscal year to the State Highway Fund. Would expand the designated uses of the funds to include not only public roadways but also public transportation, public bicycle paths, and public sidewalks.

RECENT COMMITTEE HEARINGS

US HOUSE

House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

The House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure met on January 15, 2025, to discuss the current state of US infrastructure. The Committee had a diverse set of witnesses, including Governors, Councilmembers, and two members of the private sector, all testifying to their experience with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and how it has impacted their transportation networks, but also to what extent there needs to be more help and more funding for projects under a future surface transportation bill. Committee members focused their questions around the IIJA, safety in transportation, federal dollars and their impact on local communities, and what needs to be done in the next year to get a new surface transportation bill successfully implemented.

US SENATE

Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee

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