

## **Legislative Update**

### **January 24, 2025**

#### **FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.**

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation met to vote on moving Sean Duffy's nomination to be the next US Secretary of Transportation to the full Senate for their approval. The Committee overwhelmingly approved Mr. Duffy to lead the USDOT, which was reflected in their 28-0 vote in favor of his nomination. Mr. Duffy will soon be presented to the full Senate for their vote on his nomination, and this decision will be made in the coming weeks.

#### **Buy America Requirements for Manufactured Products**

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Final rule.

SUMMARY: This final rule amends FHWA's Buy America regulation to terminate FHWA's general waiver for manufactured products and establish Buy America requirements for manufactured products with respect to Federal-aid highway projects. The standards for applying Buy America to manufactured products are generally consistent with the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) guidance implementing the Build America, Buy America Act (BABA) provisions of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)).

[Federal Register :: Buy America Requirements for Manufactured Products](#)

#### **FROM AUSTIN**

The Texas House of Representatives and Senate both filed budgets on January 22, 2025. SB 1 and HB 1 have roughly the same spending totals for TxDOT and TCEQ at this early stage. The Senate TxDOT budget is \$40.4 billion, whereas the House budget is \$40.3 billion, this represents a .1 % increase over the last biennium. Overall totals remain the same, with an increase of funds transferred to the State Highway Fund and a decrease in one-time spending for maritime transportation infrastructure programs. Currently, both bills include \$60 million in Clean Air Account 151 for FY 2026 and \$58 million for FY 2027. For Transportation, SB 1 and HB 1 allocate \$7.9 billion for Prop 1 and \$8 billion for Prop 7. Texas' total budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 is \$332.9 billion. The House and Senate will each pass a bill in the next few months and then work out the differences to pass a final budget bill by the end of the legislative session.

On Friday, January 17, 2025, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, President of the Texas Senate, announced his committee appointments. North Texas senators will serve on a number of these committees. Senator Royce West (D-23) will serve as vice chair of the Senate Transportation committee, which will also include Senators Brent Hagenbuch (R-30), Nathan Johnson (D-16), and Phil King (R-10). Furthermore, the Senate Natural Resources committee will be chaired by Senator Brian Birdwell (R-22) and include Senator Kelly Hancock (R-9) and Tan Parker (R-12) as members.

#### **HIGHLIGHTED BILLS**

##### **Bicycle Pedestrian**

SB 864 Alvarado – Relating to allowing a bicyclist to treat certain traffic-control devices as a yield sign. Would improve the rights and responsibilities of bicyclists on the road by allowing them to treat specific traffic-control devices as yield signs.

##### **High-Speed Rail**

HB 2003 Harris – Relating to provision to the Texas Department of Transportation of information regarding certain high-speed rail projects. Would require entities proposing high-speed rail projects in Texas to submit detailed financial, operational, and strategic information to the TxDOT each year, which would then be made public online.

### **Air Quality**

SB 861 Johnson – Relating to the distribution of funds designated for the low-income vehicle repair assistance, retrofit, and accelerated vehicle retirement program. Proposes distributing the original LIRAP funds back to the counties for specific air quality uses.

## **RECENT COMMITTEE HEARINGS**

### **US SENATE**

Commerce, Science, and Transportation

- 01/22- Business meeting to consider the nomination of Sean Duffy
  - The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation met on January 22 to discuss their final decision to move Sean Duffy to the full Senate vote for Secretary of Transportation.

### **US HOUSE**

Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

- 01/22 - American Builds: Highways to Move People and Freight
  - The Subcommittee on Highways and Transit met on January 22 to discuss the current state of American highway freight networks. Witnesses included various voices from state DOT representatives, private trucking and highway materials providers, and union representatives.
- 01/23 - America Builds: Examining America's Freight and Passenger Rail Network
  - The Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials met on January 23 to discuss the current state of American freight and passenger rail networks across the country. Witnesses included members from all aspects of the freight and passenger rail systems across America.

## **UPCOMING COMMITTEE HEARINGS**

### **TEXAS SENATE**

- Senate Finance will meet on February 11 to consider SB 1, General Appropriations Bill - Article VI - Natural Resources. This includes The Commission of Environmental Quality.
- Senate Finance will meet on February 12 to consider SB 1, General Appropriations Bill - Article VII - Business and Economic Development. This includes the Department of Transportation and the Department of Motor Vehicles.

### **TEXAS HOUSE**

- Committee assignments are expected soon; hearings should begin in the next few weeks.