



**To:** Board of Directors

**From:** Debbie Hale, Executive Director

**Meeting Date:** March 25, 2020

**Subject:** American Public Works Association Washington, DC Visit

During week of February 10, 2020, I participated in the American Public Works Association's (APWA) Government Affairs Committee trip to Washington, DC. Committee members divided into small groups to attend targeted meetings; I participated in the Transportation team. Our team emphasized the urgency of approving a new transportation reauthorization bill before the existing Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act expires on September 30, 2020. Without legislation or an extension by that date no federal monies will flow to transportation programs and projects.

Our team also advocated for the need to shore up the Highway Trust Fund with a short-term gas tax increase and a long-term user fee program (e.g., a vehicle-miles traveled fee). APWA has endorsed the Senate's 5-year transportation bill, which the Environment and Public Works Committee approved with a bipartisan vote. Spokespersons indicated that the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will release its bill "within a couple of months."

Nearly all committee staff meetings were with both majority and minority staff, reinforcing the notion that transportation investment, in general, enjoys support from both parties and both the House and Senate. That said, a clear consensus was that it is unlikely that any transportation reauthorization bill will be approved before the November 2020 election, with staffers noting that "the Highway Trust Fund doesn't go bankrupt until 2021." If the reauthorization is delayed, existing transportation law will need to be extended. Our team requested that any continuing resolutions be granted for a longer period of time, such as a year, to provide the most certainty. We indicated our strong concern with the possibility of several short-term extensions – which provided last time the legislation expired. There was strong agreement that transportation and infrastructure need more funding, but there was no interest in raising the federal gas tax at this time. The House bill will, however, likely propose more funding for additional vehicle miles-traveled pilot programs at the state levels.

**Below is a list of the transportation-related meetings I attended:**

- Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee staff
- Senate Finance Committee staff
- Senate Appropriations Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee staff
- House Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Subcommittee Appropriations staff
- House Transportation and Infrastructure staff directors
- Office of Congressman Jimmy Panetta, Aide John Ansini