



Top Stories

10/27/17 – The U.S. Department of Treasury [reported](#) that total Highway Trust Fund (HTF) receipts were \$41.127 billion for FY 2017, down 0.5 percent from \$41.344 billion in FY 2016.

10/25/17 – President Donald Trump [issued](#) a presidential memorandum directing the U.S. Department of Transportation to establish a pilot program to help spur further innovation of unmanned aerial systems (drones). Specifically, the pilot program would allow states and local governments to propose new models for regulating drones and apply for waivers from Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations that currently prohibit certain types of drone operations, including beyond-visual-line-of-sight, nighttime operations and flights over people. For more information read [NCSL's Info Alert](#).

10/24/17 – The president [signed](#) a \$36.5 billion emergency aid package into law in response to recent natural disasters that hit parts of the United States and its territories. The package delivers nearly \$18 billion to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, \$16 billion to the National Flood Insurance Program, \$577 million to wildfire response efforts, and allows Puerto Rico to receive up to \$4.9 billion in loans to pay employees, and fund other services. This is the second package of emergency funding, and Trump has told lawmakers he will seek a third installment in November.

10/24/17 – U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Secretary Chao [confirmed](#) that work on an infrastructure package would not commence until Congress has finalized work on tax reform.

10/18/17 – The FAA [granted](#) its first waiver for drone flights over people with no restrictions on population density. The waiver was granted to CNN for the use of a 1.37 pound aircraft

with protected propeller blades and magnetic components that are designed to break apart in the event of an impact.

10/13/17 – Waymo—formerly the Google self-driving car project—[sent](#) the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) its first voluntary autonomous vehicle safety evaluation. On Sept. 12, NHTSA [published](#) its second voluntary guidance for automated driving systems (ADS), which recommends that entities involved in the testing and deployment of ADS summarize their assessments and make them publicly available.

10/12/17 – The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [updated](#) its Real ID website to reflect the status of those states whose extension requests are under review or have been granted. DHS plans to update the website on a weekly basis to reflect the decisions being made by DHS Acting Secretary Elaine Duke. The updated map will show states granted an extension in blue, and notes that states not granted an extension can expect a short grace period from enforcement until January 22, 2018. The REAL ID Act establishes minimum federal security standards for license issuance and production and prohibits federal agencies from accepting for certain purposes driver's licenses and identification cards from states not meeting the Act's minimum standards.

10/6/17 – NHTSA [released](#) its 2016 fatal traffic crash data, finding that 37,461 lives were lost—an increase of 5.6 percent from 2015. The increase corresponds with a 2.2 percent increase in the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT), resulting in a fatality rate of 1.18 deaths per 100 million VMT – a 2.6 percent increase from 2015. Data showed that drunken-driving, speeding, unbelted, motorcyclist, pedestrians, and

bicyclist-related deaths all increased, while distraction and drowsy-driving related deaths decreased.

10/5/17 – The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) [awarded](#) \$15.5 million in Surface Transportation System Funding Alternatives (STSFA) grants to California, Colorado, Delaware, Missouri, Washington and Oregon to explore new ways to test the design, implementation and acceptance of user-based alternative revenue tools for highway and bridge projects. For more information on this program, visit NCSL.org

From Congress

10/25/17 – The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved the nomination of [Paul Trombino](#) to be the administrator of the Federal Highway Administration. Trombino previously served as the director of the Iowa Department of Transportation.

10/5/17 – A bipartisan group of 38 Senators [called](#) upon EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt to reverse proposed cuts to biodiesel and cellulosic ethanol volumes in the Renewable Fuel Standard, while also praising the agency for setting conventional biofuel volumes at the maximum allowed by law.

9/28/17 – Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.) and Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.), Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Highways and Transit Subcommittee respectively, [urged](#) the Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Ways and Means Committee to find a solution to the HTF structural revenue deficit to increase infrastructure investment and economic growth across the states. They wrote that the HTF is due to become insolvent in October 2020 with the expiration of the FAST Act.

From the Administration

10/5/17 – FHWA [proposed](#) to repeal the rule that requires state and regional highway planners receiving federal dollars to report anticipated greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles traveling on their roads. The [rule](#) went into effect on Sept. 28, after being delayed.

9/29/17 – FAA [issued](#) operational flight restrictions for drones up to 400 feet within the lateral boundaries of the Statue of Liberty and other landmarks. NCSL continues to [advocate](#) for state authority to issue similar operational restrictions.

From the Courts

10/27/17 – The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals stayed an [EPA rule](#) that would have required truck trailers to be more aerodynamic to reduce fuel use.