



## Top Stories

**11/30/217** – The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [finalized](#) volume requirements for renewable fuels for 2018 and biomass-based diesel for 2019. Specifically, next year's volume requirement for conventional biofuels is set at 15 billion gallons, the maximum set out under the Renewable Fuel Standard, while advanced biofuels must total 4.29 billion gallons, including 288 million gallons of cellulosic ethanol. EPA raised the final 2018 cellulosic ethanol volume mandate by 50 million gallons from its previous proposal earlier this year.

**11/21/17** - DOT [reported](#) that U.S. drivers logged 262.5 billion vehicle miles in September, an increase of 0.8 billion miles over September 2016. So far in 2017, travel has increased by 1.3 percent, or 31.4 billion vehicle miles from 2016. While road mileage use has increased, however, the U.S. Department of Treasury [reported](#) last month 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, meaning the HTF is feeling the effects of fuel efficiency.

**11/17/17** – The White House [submitted](#) its third disaster relief funding request that calls on Congress to appropriate an additional \$44 billion in supplemental disaster aid that includes funds for storm-damaged transportation systems, but would cut \$1 billion from federal-aid highway funds.

**11/16/17** – The House passed the [Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, 227-205](#). The bill would remove the tax exemption for private activity bonds, a key method used by states to help finance infrastructure projects. The bill would also eliminate a \$7,500 tax break for purchases of electric vehicles. However, many of these changes are not included in the current Senate version

so any potential bill approved by Congress is likely to look different.

**11/3/17** – The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) [announced](#) it is considering applications until Feb. 20, as part of a new program included in the [2015 FAST Act](#), which allows up to three states to levy tolls on existing interstate highway segments. The program allows states in the pilot to toll an existing interstate to support the rehabilitation or reconstruction of the road. Missouri, North Carolina and Virginia previously occupied spots but none implemented tolling plans under the program.

**11/3/17** – A [report](#) mandated by the [Global Change Research Act of 1990](#) concluded that human activity is the primary driver of climate change. The report reiterates findings that human activity is "extremely likely" to be the reason that global temperatures are the highest in the history of modern civilization, and found that annual global average temperatures are expected to rise by 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit by 2050 despite the decline in growth of global carbon dioxide emissions.

**11/1/17** - According to a report by the Associated Press, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) does not plan to continue with its proposed rulemaking that would have established requirements for new cars to come equipped with standard technology allowing vehicle-to-vehicle communication, enabling vehicles to transmit their location, speed, direction and other information to vehicles in their vicinity. However, a statement released by the White House after the news report noted that they "have not made any final decision on the proposed rulemaking."

## From Congress

**11/15/17** – The Senate confirmed two Department of Transportation (DOT) officials - [Steven Bradbury](#), 50-47, to serve as general counsel, and [Derek Kan](#), 90-7, to serve as the undersecretary for policy. Bradbury was previously a litigation partner at Dechert LLP, and Kan was previously the general manager for Lyft in Southern California, and has served on the board of Amtrak since 2015.

**11/9/17** - The most recent version of the [Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2018 National Defense Authorization Act \(NDAA\)](#) would restore a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) drone registration rule that a federal court threw out earlier this year. The bill includes language stating that the rule for small, unmanned aircraft "shall be restored to effect on the date of enactment of this Act." Previously, the FAA instituted registration requirements for drones in December 2015 although the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit nullified the rule in May 2017, agreeing with a drone hobbyist's argument that a 2012 law reauthorizing the FAA explicitly prohibited "any rule or regulation regarding a model aircraft." Both the [House](#) and [Senate](#) FAA reauthorization bills address the drone registration issue but are less likely, in the near term, to receive approval due to issues over other aviation items. The agency is operating under an extension through March 2018.

**11/3/17** - House Transportation Committee leaders [sent](#) a letter requesting that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) continue to evaluate subsequent rounds of the review and selection process for FASTLANE program grants. The letter follows a GAO [report](#), which raised concerns with the integrity of the selection process for the 18 projects funded as part of the FASTLANE program in 2016. Additionally, the report noted that following the renaming of FASTLANE to the INFRA program, DOT has yet to establish a clear plan to ensure decisions are made consistently and transparently.

## From the Administration

**11/20/17** - The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) [told](#) the American Farm Bureau Federation that the

agency intends to [grant](#) agricultural and livestock industries a 90-day waiver for a mandate requiring the use of electronic logging devices in place of paper logs for commercial trucks.

**11/17/17** – The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) [announced](#) that Utah is the third state to get federal certification on its rail transit State Safety Oversight program, which all states with rail transit systems need to have in place by April 15, 2019.

**11/16/17** - Amtrak [posted](#) a record-low operating loss in FY 2017 and recorded an all-time high for ridership. It posted a \$194 million operating loss, which represents a 16 percent improvement compared to FY 2016, which itself was a record year. The company saw ridership figures increase across all its service lines, with 31.7 million passenger trips, a 1.5 percent boost FY 2016. Additionally, the Northeast Corridor hit its highest year ever with 12 million passengers, a 1 percent bump over FY 2016 while state-supported routes saw 15 million riders, a 2.1 percent increase, and long-distance services saw a 0.9 percent increase to 4.6 million riders.