



Top Stories

12/15/17 – The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) [found](#) that motor vehicle travel on all U.S. highways and streets increased 1.2 percent in October from a year earlier, setting a new monthly record of 275 billion vehicle miles. This continues a trend of increasing motor vehicle travel across the country that began in 2016.

12/4/17 – The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) [reported](#) that the U.S. transportation sector is emitting more greenhouse gases than power plants for the first time since the 1970s.

11/29/17 – The House Transportation Subcommittee on Aviation held a [hearing](#) to discuss the use and integration of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) or drones in the national airspace system. The second panel of the hearing included Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Deputy Administrator Dan Elwell and UAS Integration Office Director Earl Lawrence who both made it clear that FAA viewed states as equal partners in regulating low level drone operations. While questions remain as to states' exact level of authority, it is a significant victory from 2016 when states faced outright pre-emption.

11/29/17 – International travel to the U.S. fell 3.9 percent from June 2016 through June 2017, according to [data](#) from the National Travel and Tourism Office.

From Congress

12/14/17 – The Government Accountability Office (GAO), the investigative agency within Congress, [found](#) that the Department of Transportation (DOT) violated an anti-lobbying

provision in the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Act of 2017 when it “retweeted’ and ‘liked’ a tweet urging followers to ‘[tell] Congress to pass’ pending legislation.”

11/30/17 - The House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee advanced the [Disaster Recovery Reform Act](#), which is aimed at addressing the rising costs of national disasters. Specifically, the measure would reform the [Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act](#) to allow a percentage of assistance provided in the wake of disasters to be invested in pre-hazard mitigation efforts.

11/29/17 – The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee approved [H.R. 2623](#), which would make executive orders [13771](#) and [13777](#) permanent. The former required that two federal regulations be revoked for every new one issued, while the latter mandated that agencies set up regulatory reform task forces to target rules for repeal, revision or replacement.

From the Administration

12/18/17 – The FAA [banned](#) drone operations over seven Department of Energy (DOE) sites, the government announced yesterday. Drones will be restricted from getting within 400 feet of the seven sites. This is the first time the agency has banned drones over DOE sites, but similar restrictions already exist for military bases and 10 Department of the Interior facilities including several dams and landmarks such as the Statue of Liberty, Mount Rushmore and the USS Constitution.

12/4/17 – DOT [announced](#) its intent to repeal a mandate for trains carrying crude oil and ethanol to be equipped with electronically controlled pneumatic brakes, which were aimed at reducing the risk of derailment. The decision comes following two [studies](#) that were unable to conclude that such brakes accomplished the intended goal.

12/1/17 – The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) [awarded](#) \$197 million in grants to state DOTs, transit agencies, and commuter rail lines to aid in the deployment of crash-avoiding, positive train control systems. The grants would fund 17 projects in 13 states.

11/30/17 – FRA [extended](#) its current stay on when commuter and intercity passenger railroads must develop and implement a system safety program until Dec. 2018, a year later than the rule was scheduled to go into effect.