Top Stories

4/20/19 – Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman John Barasso (R-Wyo.) announced he aims to reauthorize federal surface transportation programs before the August recess, likely ensuring that it would come before a Senate attempt at a one-time, large-scale infrastructure funding package. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) criticized this approach saying it doesn't seem "very meaningful" and that "If they're going to do it that quickly, I assume it's going to be a status quo markup with no money, which isn't very meaningful." DeFazio said that the "most crucial question in surface transportation is are we going to fund it and pay for it.. Barrasso saying no gas tax but all options are on the table, that doesn't make a lot of sense to me." DeFazio has said that he plans to introduce a gas tax increase; Barrasso has said he is steadfastly opposed.

4/9/19 – The Federal Transit Administration announced $1.1 billion in new federal funding for 11 existing projects that had previously been approved by the agency. Additionally, the agency announced that it had selected five new transit projects that would be eligible for $225 million in federal funding. The five new Capital Investment Grants included are all for bus rapid transit projects in urban areas (1) First Coast Flyer Southwest Corridor Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project in Jacksonville, Fla.; (2) Virginia Street Corridor BRT project in Reno, Nev.; (3) River Corridor/Blue Line BRT project in Albany, N.Y.; (4) Division Transit BRT project in Portland, Ore.; and (5) Central City Line BRT project in Spokane, Wash.

3/27/19 – In testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee, Acting Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Administrator Daniel Elwell stated that the agency’s "oversight approach needs to evolve to ensure that the FAA remains the global leader in achieving aviation safety."

3/26/19 – The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) announced that the $7,500 tax credit for buying electric cars made by General Motors will begin phasing out starting April 1 as 200,000 GM vehicles have been purchased. For GM electric cars bought after March 31, the credit will drop in half to $3,750 and will decrease to $1,875 on Oct. 1 and remain at that level for the next two quarters, then cease altogether after March 31, 2020.

From Congress

4/3/19 – The Senate Commerce Committee approved the nominations of Heidi King to serve as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s (NHTSA) administrator and Diana Furchtgott-Roth to be an assistant secretary of Transportation, each by a party-line vote of 14-12. The committee had approved King's nomination in June 2018, also along party lines, but her nomination never came to a vote in the full Senate before the end of the 115th Congress.

3/28/19 – The Senate confirmed Nicole Nason to be administrator of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), 95-1. She recently served as an assistant secretary for administration at the State Department and previously served as both NHTSA administrator and as an assistant secretary at Department of Transportation (DOT). She also worked at Customs and Border Protection and for several congressional committees.

3/27/19 – The House Transportation Committee approved H.R. 1108 that would, if enacted, keep the FAA funded during future
government shutdowns. Specifically, the bill would allow the FAA to draw from the Airport and Airway Trust Fund “for continuing programs, projects or activities” during a shutdown. The legislation comes after the longest government shutdown in U.S. history, which lasted 34 full days.

From the Administration

4/24/19 – FHWA offered new state-specific driving data, highlighting the states with the most and least miles driven in 2017. Rural states top the charts, with Wyoming clocking in at more than 23,000 miles per driver (MPD). D.C. ranks at the bottom with only about 7,000 MPD.

4/4/19 – DOT Secretary Elaine L. Chao announced the immediate availability of $25 million in “quick release” Emergency Relief funds from FHWA to help repair roads damaged by flooding in Nebraska.

3/7/19 – FAA announced it has partnered with Kittyhawk, a drone fleet management software company, to help recreational drone operators learn where they can and cannot fly by redeveloping B4UFLY. Although NCSL continues to advocate for state authority to issue time, manner, and place (TMP) restrictions on drone operations, FAA continues to assert itself as the sole regulator of all federal airspace down to ground level, including over private property.