



Top Stories

1/8/2016 - The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [released](#) an updated timeline for the implementation of the final phase of REAL ID, which pertains to enforcement by the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) at airports regarding domestic air travel. Beginning Jan. 22, 2018, passengers with a driver's license issued by a state that is still not compliant with the REAL ID Act (and has not been granted an extension) will need to show an alternative form of acceptable identification for domestic air travel. Passengers with driver's licenses issued by a state that is compliant with REAL ID (or a state that has been issued an extension) will be able to use their state issued driver's licenses or identification cards. On Oct. 1, 2020, every air traveler will need a REAL ID-compliant license, or another acceptable form of identification, for domestic air travel. Currently, DHS has determined that 22 states and the District of Columbia are fully compliant with the REAL ID Act leaving most of the remaining states and territories operating under an extension through Oct. 10, 2016. Several states are noncompliant. For a list of those states deemed compliant, click [here](#).



1/8/2016 – The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) [formally](#) issued apportionment notices to states for funds allocated to them as part of the five-year surface transportation reauthorization, Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, approved last December. Specifically, states will

receive \$39.7 billion in federal-aid highway funds for FY 2016, up nearly \$2 billion from FY 2015. A state by state funding chart can be found [here](#).

12/23/2016 - As part of [FY 2016 omnibus agreement](#), Congress ordered U.S. DOT to allow states to make use of past congressional earmark funds administered by FHWA as additional federal funding. Only funding from earmarks that were at least 10 years old and for which less than 10 percent of the amount originally made available has been obligated would qualify. It is unclear exactly the level of funding this will provide to states, an early estimate ballparks the figure at \$2 billion, although the funds are not likely to be evenly distributed.

From the 114th Congress

1/21/2016 – Representative Peter DeFazio (D-Ore.) [reported](#) that DOT Secretary Anthony Foxx informed him that DOT would not complete until June 2017 a final rule regarding community and first responder planning in the event of an oil train spill. Congress had previously required that such a rule be completed by Dec. 18, 2016.

From the Department of Transportation (DOT)

1/27/2016 – Following passage of FAST Act last month, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) launched a [website](#) that

includes an overview of the changes, 17 fact sheets describing individual programs, and a PowerPoint presentation that provides a comprehensive overview of the legislation and its implications.

1/22/2016 - The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) [reported](#) that nearly 300,000 owners have registered their small unmanned aircraft (drones). Previously, on Dec. 14, the FAA unveiled an interim final rule for drone registration that would require consumers who own drones between .55 lbs. and 55 lbs. to register their craft by Feb. 19, 2016. Drones purchased after Dec. 21, 2015, must be registered before the first outdoor flight. Additionally, on Jan. 6, FAA Administrator Michael Huerta [said](#) the FAA has authorized more than 3,000 commercial operators to use drones, with uses ranging from movie filming and smokestack inspections to aerial photography and land surveying. A final rule on commercial drone usage is expected later this year.

1/22/2016 - DOT [reported](#) that travel on all roads and streets increased by 4.3 percent for November 2015, as compared with November 2014, while road travel over the past 12 months has gone up by 3.6 percent year-over-year. The increase continues the growth in total vehicle miles travelled following a decline in late 2007 and 2008 that coincided with the recession.

1/22/2016— The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) [issued a proposal](#) to establish new safety fitness rating system for trucks and motorcoaches. Specifically, the proposed rulemaking would update the current rating system that's been in place for 34 years, by removing "satisfactory, conditional and unsatisfactory" determinations for a simpler designation of "fit" and "unfit." Additionally, the proposal would adjust the factors that are used to determine safety ratings, with regulators looking at both on-road safety data from inspections, as well as crash reports and investigation results.

1/15/2016 - DOT reached [an agreement](#) with 18 domestic and foreign automakers to improve vehicle safety by catching defects sooner and bolstering drivers against cybersecurity threats. Foxx noted the agreement "Will help improve the quality of data that automakers and NHTSA analyze to seek defects today, and they will find ways to generate better data in

the future. When recalls are necessary, they will help us reach consumers and get their vehicles repaired."

1/14/2016 - DOT announced that it will [propose](#) spending \$4 billion over 10 years in their FY 2017 budget submission to accelerate the development and adoption of automated vehicles, via a series of pilot programs that test connected vehicle systems in designated corridors throughout the country. It remains unclear if Congress will fully fund the proposal.

Other News Items

1/11/2016 – The DOT Inspector General issued a [report](#) outlining a number of issues with the FAA including "significant weaknesses" in the agency's staffing plan which had led to certain facilities being short on air traffic controllers. Additionally, the report notes that congressional efforts to streamline the FAA over the last two decades have done little to make the agency more productive or keep its costs from ballooning. The issue is likely to impact the upcoming FAA reauthorization bill that is expected to be unveiled in early February.

12/28/2015 – The Federal Reserve Board [transferred](#) to the U.S. Treasury \$19.3 billion as part of the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act. In total the Federal Reserve will transfer nearly \$60 billion to help maintain the solvency of the Highway Trust Fund.

12/24/2015 – DOT's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) [issued](#) a safety alert that identifies safety concerns with the transport of hoverboards containing lithium batteries.

NCSL Resources

NCSL's 2015 Capitol Forum drew hundreds of legislators and legislative staff to Washington, D.C., for committee meetings, issue sessions and visits to Capitol Hill.

[See presentations and other material from the meeting on our NCSL Capitol Forum resources page.](#)