



Top Stories

9/20/16 – The National Highway and Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA) [issued](#) updated non-binding guidance for the development of highly autonomous vehicles (HAVs). The policy is broken down into four parts—vehicle performance guidelines; model state policy; NHTSA’s current regulatory tools; and possible new regulatory actions NHTSA believes could be helpful in ensuring the safe development of HAVs.

States will retain traditional licensing and registration, traffic laws and enforcement, and motor vehicle insurance and liability regimes. For more information, see NCSL’s [info alert](#).

9/15/16 – The U.S. Senate passed, 95-3, the [Water Resources Development Act of 2016](#) which authorizes \$10.6

billion for inland water and harbor maintenance projects, safe drinking water and clean water infrastructure. Additionally, the bill included funding for communities affected by water contamination from lead pipes. For more information, see NCSL’s [info alert](#). The House also approved its bill on Sept. 28, although it did not include funding authorization language for safe drinking and clean water programs. For more information, see NCSL’s [info alert](#).

9/1/16 – The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) [released](#) its first list of 79 waivers issued to unmanned aircraft system (drone) operators. Most of the waivers allow the operators to fly regardless of daylight. Some of those who applied for waivers

were also granted the ability to fly over individuals, to operate multiple drones during the day or night, and to operate drones beyond the line of sight. The waivers expire in four years.

8/31/16 – NHTSA data [shows](#) fatalities for motor vehicle occupants, motorcycle and pedestrians deaths rose sharply in 2015. Specifically, motor vehicle deaths were 35,092, a 7.2 percent increase, ending a 50-year trend of declining fatalities. Additionally, pedestrian fatalities increased by 9.5 percent, the highest since 1996 while motorcyclist deaths also increased by 8.3 percent, the highest since 2012.

8/30/16 – The U.S. Department of Transportation’s (DOT) Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) [announced](#) \$14.2 million in grants for states under a new program, Surface Transportation System Funding Alternatives (STSFA). The grants will explore alternative revenue mechanisms to sustain the long-term

solvency of the Highway Trust Fund. For more information, see NCSL’s [info alert](#).



From Congress

9/22/16 – The House passed [H.R. 5625](#) requiring the General Services Administration to issue regulations allowing any federal employee to receive reimbursement while using ride-share, bike-share or car-share services for official travel.

9/13/16 – Leaders of the House Energy and Commerce Committee [called](#) upon NHTSA to examine cybersecurity

issues regarding access to a car's mechanical and electronic systems.

From the Administration

9/14/16 – The U.S. DOT's Federal Transit Authority (FTA) [announced](#) a \$1.04 billion grant agreement with the San Diego Association of Governments to extend existing Blue Line Trolley service in San Diego. An initial \$100 million was awarded with the signing, and remaining funds will be dispersed annually for the next 10 years, subject to Congressional approval during the appropriations process.

9/12/16 – The Federal Railroad Authority [awarded](#) \$25 million in grants to increase safety at railroad crossings, train stations and tracks. A total of 23 projects in 14 states and the District of Columbia received funding.

9/8/16 – FTA [announced](#) \$211 million in grants for new buses and facilities to improve bus service nationwide under its Bus and Bus Facilities Grant Program. Sixty-one projects in 41 states, the Virgin Island and Indian County will receive funding. a full list can be found [here](#).

9/7/16 – FTA [awarded](#) \$55 million across 20 projects for the Low or No Emission Grant Program that was authorized by the Fixing American's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act.

9/1/16 – NHTSA [issued](#) a proposed rule to amend how the agency notifies purchasers of a vehicle that is recalled. The rule would now require that the purchaser be sent both electronic and certified mail, in accordance with the FAST Act, and the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act.

8/30/16 – FHWA is [seeking](#) feedback from states on additional authority regarding real estate acquisition and project design in order to make recommendations to permit additional state authority in these areas, as required by the FAST Act. The comment period closes Oct. 31, 2016.

8/29/16 – Amtrak [received](#) a \$2.4 billion loan from the DOT under the FRA's Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement

Financing Program in order to cover the cost of 28 new trains and additional improvements to Amtrak's high-speed Acela service from Washington, D.C. to Boston, M.A.

8/29/16 – FAA [urged](#) drone operators to give the agency 90 days to consider controlled airspace applications. Notifications of status will be sent beginning in October.

8/25/16 – The Office of the Inspector General at the DOT [found](#) that the FHWA does not effectively ensure states account for preliminary engineering costs and reimburse funds, as required by MAP-21.

8/25/16 – NHTSA and the Federal Motor Carrier Administration [proposed](#) a rule to require all vehicles manufactured in the U.S. with a gross weight of more than 26,000 pounds to be equipped with speed limiting devices which would cap speeds at a max of 68 miles per hour and save an estimated \$1.1 billion in fuel costs.

8/22/16 – The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration [proposed](#) a pilot program for persons between the ages of 18 and 21 with military driving experience to operate commercial vehicles in interstate commerce.

Other News

9/2/16 – The Gulf Coast Working Group, [sent](#) a letter to both the House and Senate Transportation Committees providing an update on infrastructure requirements and costs needed to restore passenger rail service along the Gulf.

8/19/16 – Amtrak [named](#) a new President and CEO, Charles W. "Wick" Moorman. Moorman was formerly chairman, CEO and president of Norfolk Southern Corp.

NCSL Resources

Register now for the NCSL Capitol Forum, Dec. 6-9, in Washington, D.C., to tackle critical state-federal issues, gain insight from national experts, and work with committees to craft the States' Agenda. [Registration and housing are now open.](#)