President Trump asks Congress to Incentivize $1.5 Trillion for Infrastructure, ITS America Reacts

President Trump asked Congress to put forward a $1.5 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill in 2018. The President said during State of the Union Speech, “I am asking both parties to come together to give us the safe, fast, reliable, and modern infrastructure our economy needs and our people deserve,” The administration has previously called for a $200 billion federal investment to leverage private, state and local funding to get to a $1 trillion package.

The focus the proposal was leverage of federal infrastructure dollars. Trump did not mention broadband or other technology issues in his January 30th speech. (White House said in a statement a quarter of federal funds allocated for the plan would address rural infrastructure needs to include broadband)

Shailen Bhatt, President and CEO of ITS America released a statement on the State of the Union Address “We thank President Trump for speaking to the need to rebuild our nation’s infrastructure. For our country to compete and win in the 21st Century, we need to be leaders in emerging technologies such as connected and automated vehicles and other smart transportation solutions. The Intelligent Transportation Society of America urges integrating technology throughout our country’s infrastructure as well as new funding and financing for smart transportation
investments to remain competitive in the global economy. In an era of constrained budgets, making sure that every taxpayer dollar achieves the highest return on investment is critical.”

A White House Fact Sheet issued during the speech appears to align with the leaked “funding principles” document. The Fact sheet suggests the 50 percent portion to incentivize state and local investment and the 25 percent that would go toward rural communities.

ITS America kicked off its infrastructure task force on February 1. The task force had a special representative from the US Department of Transportation’s Office of the Secretary to discuss the Administration’s infrastructure proposal, as President Trump announced in the State of the Union (SOTU) speech on January 30th. Grover Burthey was on the call. Mr. Burthey is a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Policy and has experience as an investment manager. He was vice president and portfolio manager at PIMCO, focusing on structured credit, corporate debt and real estate investments.

Comments to USDOT on Automated Driving Systems Due March 2, 2018

Request for Information (RFI) on Automated Driving Systems (ADS) comments for Federal Highway Comments and for NHTSA must be received on or before March 5, 2018. Comments to FTA on ADS must be submitted earlier, (March 2, 2018.) ITS America will review draft comments on all of these with the Automated Vehicle Task Force. (See all ITSA filings on Autonomous Vehicle here.)

Legislative News

ITSA President & CEO Bhatt Meets with House and Senate Committees, Calls for a Technology-Focused Infrastructure Bill

In meetings with the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and Senate Committees on Environment and Public Works and Commerce, Science, and
Transportation in January, ITS America President and CEO Shailen Bhatt spoke to the benefits of ITS and urged funding for technology in an infrastructure bill. Bhatt specifically urged the Committees to ensure that vehicle-to-infrastructure (V2I) eligible activities under the FAST Act are eligible and receive funding and that the legislation includes funding for broadband in urban and rural areas to support the deployment of ITS applications. Bhatt spoke to the 26 states and cities that are deploying V2I technology and Colorado Department of Transportation’s RoadX as real-world best practices of how ITS is being deployed now to enhance road safety, improve throughput and reliability, and support infrastructure for connected and automated vehicles.

White House Infrastructure Plan Receives Lukewarm Reception on the Hill

As details of President Trump’s $1.5 trillion infrastructure trickle out, frustration is growing in Congress that the Administration would propose such a large infrastructure program without a way to pay for the $200 billion Federal portion. In meetings with the Senate Committees on Environment and Public Works and Commerce, Science, and Transportation, ITS America President and CEO Shailen Bhatt was told that Senate would not assume the responsibility for identifying funding for the President’s infrastructure plan. At a meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors in January, Special Assistant to the President for Infrastructure Policy DJ Gribbin provided a glimpse into the Administration’s thinking by saying the money could come from funding cuts to Amtrak and transit programs. ITS America has been told by House and Senate transportation aides that they are not looking at cuts to transportation programs.

The New Democrat Coalition Recommends Innovative Technologies for Infrastructure Projects

The New Democrat Coalition 21st Century Infrastructure Task Force released on January 31, 2018, a set of priorities to increase federal investments in infrastructure. Co-Chaired by Reps. John Delaney (D-MD), Elizabeth Esty (D-CT), Stacey Plaskett (D-VI), and Norma Torres (D-CA), the recommendations include:
Innovative technologies to revitalize old infrastructure and when building new projects;

Modernize revenue sources and protect infrastructure funds from other purposes;

Seed funding to capitalize an infrastructure bank that would be accessible to States, localities, and regional groups;

Grant programs that specifically target areas in desperate need of revitalizing their infrastructure; and

Implement the streamlining provisions in the FAST Act.

The New Democrat Coalition is made up of 61 Democrats who are committed to pro-economic growth, pro-innovation, and fiscally responsible policies. Read more here.

**Senate Commerce Committee Field Hearing on Driving Automotive Innovation and Federal Policies**

The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation held a field hearing on January 24, 2018, entitled “Driving Automotive Innovation and Federal Policies.” The hearing examined self-driving and other auto technologies as well as issues on the horizon for lawmakers and regulators. The Committee’s self-driving bill, the “AV START Act,” was largely the focus of the hearing. Committee Chairman John Thune (R-SD) said, “If U.S. regulators are not able to foster safe testing and deployment of AV technology through modernizations like those in AV START, the rest of the world will not sit by.” Committee Ranking Member Bill Nelson (D-FL) noted that “The AV START Act reinforces the traditional, existing roles played by the federal, state, and local governments pertaining to vehicle regulation.”

Luke Schneider, President, Audi Mobility U.S. said, “There is an urgency for the Senate to pass the AV START Act because it will create for innovators a consistent national regulatory framework for automated vehicles necessary to advance the new mobility solutions that will positively transform American cities, provide mobility to the elderly and disabled, and ensure greater safety on our roads, a
priority we share with your Committee and the Department of Transportation.” Furthermore, he noted, “Passage of this legislation will allow us to realize the three transportation revolutions we so often talk about: shared mobility, electrification and automated vehicles, enhanced by digitalization.” Audi/VW is a member of the ITS America Advocacy Trust.

ITS America supports passage of the AV START Act in the Senate. Read more here.

**Senators Peters, Stabenow Lead Bipartisan Call to Fund Testing and Development of Self-Driving Cars in Spending Deal**

U.S. Senators Gary Peters (D-MI) and Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) led a bipartisan call on January 23, 2018, to fund testing and development of connected and automated vehicle technology at the proving grounds officially designated by the Department of Transportation as part of any government spending deal that is negotiated for 2018. The Senators made their request in a letter to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Housing, Urban Development, and Related Agencies, Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Jack Reed (D-RI). U.S. Senators Thom Tillis (R-NC), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), and Bill Nelson (D-FL) also signed the letter. Read more here.

**Dig Once Bill Introduced in the House**

Congresswoman Anna G. Eshoo (D-CA) and Congressman David B. McKinley (R-WV) introduced on January 17, 2018, the H.R. 4800, the “Broadband Conduit Deployment Act of 2018.” The bill would require States to evaluate the need for broadband conduit as part of a highway project, including new highway, additional lane, or paved shoulder for an existing highway. The evaluation would be done in consultation with local and national telecommunications providers. If the review reveals an anticipated need in the next 15 years for broadband conduit, the conduit shall be installed as part of the highway construction projects.
On January 31, 2018, ITS America President and CEO Shailen Bhatt spoke at the ITS-CT/ITE-CT Joint Winter Meeting, where he briefed participants on the association’s priorities.

On January 31, 2018, ITS America VP for External Affairs Jason Goldman attended the ITS VA Legislative Reception.

On January 31, 2018, the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) announced that it had posted the 2017 autonomous vehicle disengagement reports on its website. According to the DMV, the 19 reports submitted to the department from autonomous vehicle test permit holders summarize the disengagements of the technology caused by the failure of the technology or when the test driver needed to take immediate manual control of the vehicle during testing.

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